

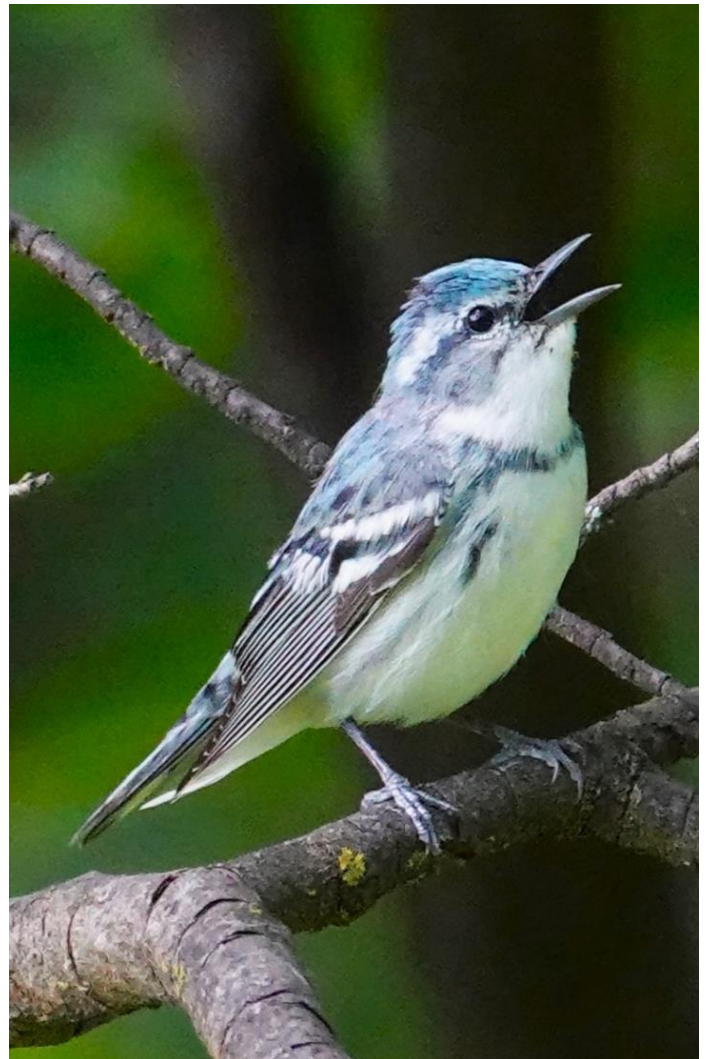


The Distelfink

Fall 2024 Newsletter of the Baird Ornithological Club

Contents

President’s Message by Sheila Martin	2
September 13, 2024 Meeting will be via ZOOM only!.....	3
Audubon Christmas Bird Counts, by the Numbers – Lucy Cairns	4
Bird Safe Philly- a PBS Newshour feature	5
Conservation Advocate Joins BOC board of directors – Dave Hemberger	5
BOC Outreach - Bethel Tulpehocken Library - Susan Wolfe ..	5
Travel tips from Sheila Martin - Monocular Review	6
Congratulations to BOC Member Hannah Salvatore, eBird Prize winner	7
Call For Speakers to give short presentations at our April 2025 meeting!.....	7
Upcoming BOC Meetings/Programs – September 2024 through May 2025	8
BOC Field Trips & Bird Walks - Fall 2024 – Spring 2025.....	9
Past Field Trip Reports	16
Berks County Birds Dec, 2023 – Feb, 2024 by Rudy Keller ..	18
Berks County Birds, Spring 2024 compiled by Rudy Keller ..	22
B.O.C. Initial & Renewal Memberships, Now at Two Levels	26
The Baird Ornithological Club gratefully acknowledges our Sustaining Donors of '23 – '24	26
Baird Ornithological Club, Current Officers and directors ...	26
BOC Membership and Renewal	26



A Male Cerulean Warbler. Photo by Brian Lineaweaver.

President's Message by Sheila Martin



Welcome back to Baird Ornithological Club '24-'25! – and to another exciting year of organized club birding!

By the time you read this, it will be early September. And I will have, hopefully, finished a fun and wildly appealing event called the 5th Annual **Middle Creek Wild Goose Chase** 5K Run/Walk! What self-proclaimed athlete of any stripe or experience would NOT want to enter in swell competition (told to BOC by way of Nolde ally Rebekah), once reading such a cheeky name? Sponsored by the Penna. Game Commission, all proceeds are going to Middle Creek, to benefit wildlife education & habitat management. When you bump into me out in the field or at meetings, ask me how I DID!

BOC is excited (relieved?) – to be (mostly) back at Nolde Forest EEC for our Second Friday Night general meetings, after the beautiful & “like home” McConnell Hall underwent major infrastructure improvements. Our meeting dates this term are:

September 13, October 11, November 8 & December 13, **2024** – then, January 10, February 14, March 14, April 11 and May 9, **2025**. Wintertime sessions of January & February will be remote via Zoom for your safety, convenience & preference; December's session remains “live” at Nolde, as BOC is Mengel Natural History Society's guest for that evening, with a program of world-traveling nature-viewing. Meanwhile, program presenters and their scheduling are fast falling into place – including fascinating broad topics like parrots in America, grasslands/fall migration, a deep-dive into recent world history rolled into beautiful bird-watching, plus the ever-popular Members' Night. Finally, yes, in-the-works, we hope once again to round out the term with dinner out-&-about, featuring a keynote topic of compelling concern yet hopeful awareness & optimism for

both BOC & MNHS troupes. Find details in the pages following.

It's time again to **pay dues!** Baird's most actively-functioning **club term starts on September 1,** running through the May meeting's culmination dinner, yet you'll find events on the calendar to enjoy over the summer too. **Join – or Renew now!** Via **PayPal or coupon/write-a-check/snail mail**. Either at the general rate, or a more rarefied benevolence Sustaining Member level. Active “you're OK” **dues-pay span has been compressed** – where **November 1**, you'll be considered “late” with a tickler message; **December 10**, considered “very late” with more “reminding”; **12/31/24** will find your still-unpaid renewal as “formally in-arrears.”

A listing of birding field trips – assembled & curated by some of BOC's finest, and coordinated for the entire term by Russ Hoffman, is found within these pages. Check it out and notate your calendar! Baird is privileged to have some of the most knowledgeable, helpful and fun outing leaders as anyone could hope to find in a satisfying nature-walk experience. With a palette of over 40 organized walks and “sits” per year, one cannot HELP but “up” their birding acumen & enjoyment. Set your alarm just a bit earlier – and come on out!

BOC's **Officers & Board**: Though we waved so long to Mike Slater from the board in May, he remains in-place as our dedicated web/tech-master & Distelfink publisher. From there, we say hello to Dan Brennan and Dave Hemberger stepping up and into place. Our treasury feels comfortably okay – yet we perceive that, with an isolating pandemic in retreat, most speakers now eagerly prefer to appear in-person. So, each of them – quite fairly, **commands a speaker's fee or expenses** for their birding perspective & expertise, which your board is astutely considering. Shaking free as well from the anxious constraints of remote board meetings and the mere “how do we accomplish “X”?” questions of retaining, growing & nurturing a club through Zoom, your board now feels more attentive to look at administration, analysis, even by-laws-update functions with a heightened fiduciary, visionary, guiding hand.

Watch for a **brief e-survey** this Fall. Please fill it out; tell us what you think; give insight perhaps for the whole ~120+ lot of us – to pursue and benefit from!

Last year in this message, I likened Baird Ornithological Club's officers & board of directors to being rather “lima bean-shaped”! That remains true; even more so. Our board convenes, plans, operates & governs, cooperatively & smoothly, **yet is currently TWO officers down**. Right off the bat this term, I'm speaking to you of **leadership succession**. Whether in this club, one's house of worship maybe, or any organization, we hear the unflattering slang, “recycling the board”, “churning the board” etc. Ultimately, yes, it's ideal to have fresh new talent, with energetic, innovative perspectives to step up and serve a prescribed term on the top team. It's also valid, in a time of celebration, to congratulate those who have fulfilled their commitment, and give voice wishing to step down, being **“let out to pasture!”** Some among us have honorably, truly attained, *EARNED* emeritus status. Still, considering frankly the largely Boomer demographic of BOC, and the weaned-on-E-bird birders behind us, who tend to be LESS-, or NON-joiners, is it not reasonable to, at least in this short term, **ask a few among us** who have sat for a term, or swapped chairs in their officer-ships, **to do it again?** Launching a Nominating Committee in February or March for the coming year is overly frantic, at a time when our most enjoyable birding experiences are firing up, and folks' attention runs elsewhere. I've asked your board (and certainly, you'll hear it from me) to talk it up NOW and continuing routinely & regularly throughout the year, of serving or re-serving in any board capacity in '25-'26. “Battle-ribboned veterans”, and our top birders: **please consider re-enlisting!** Thanks very much.

Have a phenomenal year of Baird Club birding!

See you out there!

Cordially,
Sheila

September 13, 2024 Meeting will be via ZOOM only!

Dear BOC Members & Meeting Guests –

We have been notified this week of the following Nolde Forest update:

“Unfortunately, our construction has been pushed out through the end of September, so the McConnell Hall classroom will not be available yet for a September meeting.”

Therefore, **our first meeting** of the '24-'25 club term, **Friday, September 13, 2024, shall be held remotely only, via Zoom**. Members in good standing will receive an e-mail meeting link several days prior. The general public may participate by messaging a request to the Mike Slater at paplantings@gmail.com

Our meeting speaker will be Dr. Jennifer J. Uehling, Ph.D. of West Chester University, presenting her topic, “Naturalized Parrots in the USA”.

Audubon Christmas Bird Counts, by the Numbers – Lucy Cairns

- 124** Years this winter bird census has been carried out, making it the longest-running community science bird project in the nation.
- 112** Years the CBC has included a count in Berks County.
- 3** Field observers in the first Reading CBC (1911). G. Henry Mengel recorded 125 birds of 12 species along the Wyomissing Creek. The full count was of 136 birds of 14 species.
- 53** Field observers in the most recent Reading CBC (Dec. 17, 2023). They counted 19,876 birds of 80 species.
- 2677** Counts submitted for the 124th CBC. Each count is a dawn-to-dusk effort to find all birds present within a 15-mile-diameter circle (177 square miles).
- 5** CBC circles include a portion of Berks County. The Reading circle is the only one entirely within county borders, with the center located just north of Antietam Lake. The other four are the Lehigh Valley, Hamburg, Bernville, and Elverson counts. An interactive map of CBC circles in the 124th count can be found at: <https://gis.audubon.org/christmasbirdcount/>
- 37** Years that Matt Spence served as the compiler of the Reading CBC data. When Matt passed away in October of 2021, the BOC was gifted with his meticulous records.
- 125,000** American Crows were counted in 1969, at a large roost present near the Lake Ontelaunee dam breast from 1960 – 1975.
- 5,003** American Black Ducks were reported in the 1953 count.
- 10,843** American Robins in 1985.
- 152** Rusty Blackbirds in 1974.
- 15** Bald Eagles in 2023 (a record high)
- 1** Lincoln’s Sparrow reported by Rudy Keller in 2023. Every year we find a few surprises, and this western sparrow was a big one. It was the first record of a Lincoln Sparrow for the Reading count.
- \$0** Cost to participate in the CBC. The project relies on donations. Data access is free.
- 0** **Zero experience needed.** Birders of any level participating for the first time will be teamed up with experienced field observers. This is a great learning opportunity.
- 3** Options for supporting the CBC: 1) volunteer as a field observer, 2) register to submit a count at your feeder if you live within a circle, and 3) donate to the CBC at <https://act.audubon.org/a/donate-onetime> Many people do all three!

To volunteer for this year’s CBC, contact the compiler of your choice, listed below:

December 15, 2024 (Sunday) Reading Christmas Bird Count

Compiler: Lucy Cairns ljanetcairns@gmail.com Cell: 610-223-4501

December 20 (Friday) Elverson Christmas Bird Count

Compiler: Jim Cook jim@elversonsupply.net Cell: 610-587-7545 Work: 610- 286-5021

December 29 (Sunday) Hamburg Christmas Bird Count

Compiler: Laurie Goodrich 570-943-3411 Ext. 106 goodrich@hawkmountain.org

January 4, 2025 (Saturday) Bernville Christmas Bird Count

Compiler: Mike Slater paplantings@gmail.com

Bird Safe Philly- a PBS Newshour feature

The PBS NewsHour featured Bird Safe Philly in a segment that aired on Saturday, June 15th. Bird Safe Philly is an effort that creates safe spaces for birds to thrive, by spreading awareness of the issue of bird collisions in the built environment. One of its most successful efforts to-date has been Lights Out Philly, which encourages office building owners in the Philadelphia business district to turn off their lights at night during spring and fall migration seasons. Doing so helps to prevent birds from flying into glass.

This important work involves the collaboration of many organizations, including Wyncote Audubon Society, Valley Forge Audubon Society, The Academy of Natural Science, The Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, and the National Audubon Society. Audubon Mid-Atlantic's Delaware River Watershed Program Manager, Robin Irizarry, is featured in the video. You can view it on the [PBS NewsHour YouTube channel, here](#).

Conservation Advocate Joins BOC board of directors – Dave Hemberger

As a new BOC board member and active leader within the Pennsylvania Sierra Club (SC), I'm hoping to bring my "conservation and advocacy" experience into my service with BOC. As Chapter chair of the Sierra Club's political program, I have come to appreciate the impact of our state and federal legislators in setting climate and environmental protection policies and practices. Knowing who among our political candidates espouses positions consistent with our conservation priorities should be a key factor in determining our vote this November.

I meet regularly with the SC's lobbyist in Harrisburg, and receive updated information about important legislation that impacts our interests, such as recently introduced expansions to Sunday hunting. Our legislators also need to know that our group has a vested interest in the outcome of proposed policy, so I hope I can be helpful in providing our members with talking points when contacting state and federal representatives. As to the November elections, an excellent resource in tracking the environmental voting record of our incumbent legislators is the League of Conservation Voters "Environmental Score Card": Pennsylvania <https://scorecard.conservationpa.org> National: <https://scorecard.lcv.org>

BOC Outreach - Bethel Tulpehocken Library - Susan Wolfe

At the request of Bethel Tulpehocken Library, four BOC members volunteered to present a bird program as part of the library's Summer Reading Program, Adventure Is Around Us, on July 23. Russ Hoffman showed his fabulous photos on a large screen while Art Zdancewic discussed the adaptations of the birds' beaks, talons, etc. Afterwards, Hannah Salvatore and Sue Wolfe explained the migration display and feeding activity station provided by the library and donated to the club. There were also activities to make toilet paper roll binoculars and bird feeders, feathered birds, and a coloring table. The newly renovated library was a perfect venue for the more than 80 people in attendance, with a majority of



*Children at the BOC presentation at the Bethel Library.
Photo by Russ Hoffman*

elementary students and accompanying adults. It is the third busiest library in Berks County. The librarians were very enthusiastic and pleased with the participation of the students and a follow-up bird walk is being planned for fall.

Travel tips from Sheila Martin - Monocular Review

Though blissful at a long-coveted destination - on a guided, small-group, day-hiking trip - ticking off three more U.S. national parks in our desert southwest this past January, I'd have glimmers of occasional distraction. While each day held the same purpose and goal - of covering 6-8 exciting miles of variable, mostly single-track, incredibly scenic trails steeped in the geologic story of our continent – and natural history of every stripe at every turn, rise and crossing; anticipated images, plans & consideration for the NEXT trip I'd be taking just five weeks later kept popping into my head!

How would I pack small, light-of-weight, logically-yet-enough for two drastically, radically different connecting tours spanning three weeks in two vastly different countries? Europe would be awakening from her last bits of winter on my “pinch-me, I must be dreaming” high-fashion, dress-to-impress tour of three Italian cities. Yet, then, winging onward far to the southwest – where she'd be displaying her breezy, gnarly, full-on springtime cliffy seascapes of Portugal's Algarve – for another week of remote, rustic hiking – in trek-dedicated duds & footwear? How could I experience this unique, immersive two-arm goal – and NOT fold in some springtime birding in Europe to boot, however individual that aspect might be? My answer came in Guadelupe Mountains National Park from a volunteer ranger, whom I approached and inquired, “Excuse me, sir, is that a monocular?”

He spent the next 7 minutes of our rest break running down features and benefits of the instrument on a lanyard around his neck. I knew my losing-sleep problem of too-heavy, too-complicated-to-pack binoculars – used merely, surely, for scratching the surface of Europe's springtime birds during hiking – then and there found its instant solution!

The big benefit for me, as a first-time field user of such an instrument, is what it accomplishes for its size, weight & convenience when birding is not your primary pursuit. Some people had told me that monoculars generally were gimmicky toys, not any good beyond 12 feet. Others said that you need at least 30 feet for them even to start to work! Others said, “Who wants to close one eye?” Still others claimed that the tinier, close-up-lens ones, at 8X20 say, for viewing butterflies on the trail before you is really the only task this category of optic benefits, with other nature targets more-or-less an afterthought. Hmm –

I went to Maven Optics Company of Lander Wyoming for their CM.1 – 8X32 Monocular, at \$195. (I use this company's binoculars as well, having read top favorable reviews on them within my price-point on Audubon's binocular-finder page.) This ultra-compact optic harnesses the same level of clarity and resolution found in its binocular sibling. At 8x32 magnification, it has a nice field of view for birding and wildlife viewing. I would learn only later however, that the brand I picked seems to be the only one NOT offering a case & strap in the purchase bundle. At 8.7 oz. weight, it proves to be one of the heavier ones marketed by recognizable brands, though some others do go 'way higher. This “CON” proved not to be a deterrent for me in the field. Vortex's Solo monocular product is offered (among others) in a tops-for-birding optical configuration of 8x36, priced at ~\$170. Its published weight is 9.7 oz. It does come with a utility clip, neck lanyard & carry case, all of which I had to add to Maven's, on my own. Zeiss offers a whole family of monoculars at increasing size and purpose,



with this marketing statement: "Whether you are watching dragonflies in the reeds or birds at great distance, [Zeiss] Monos are an often undervalued but extremely useful aid to nature observation". I was unable to find MSRP's online for any product in this line. Celestron appears to have several models available on its website and through Amazon, of varying optic configurations, materials & specifications. Their price-points are far lower than others seen (however that aspect might appeal or bode warning.)

Leica's Monovid 8x20 seems to be positioned as a true high-end monocular, touting superior technology ideal for birdwatchers and hikers who need to travel light, or for concertgoers and sports fans alike. Its close-up lens heightens its use to reduced distances of 25-30 cm for viewing butterflies & insects. Its published weight is under 6 oz; showing a price of ~\$580. Swarovski showed no monocular offering in their lineup.

In practical application, I am certain that I would have not seen – and correctly identified – the 20-odd birds I ticked off on my own in chilly Italy or balmy, luscious Portugal. Male Bullfinch on a wire, and Sardinian Warbler in cliff-edge beachy scrub grass were fine rewards for a modest enough price, for a true multi-focus traveler like me!



Sardinian Warbler, 13 April 2009. This photo was taken by **Andreas Trepte**. www.avi-fauna.info. Wikimedia Commons - This file is licensed under [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.5 Generic](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5/)

Congratulations to BOC Member Hannah Salvatore, eBird Prize winner

On behalf of BOC's entire membership, Baird's board congratulates Hannah Salvatore on her recent very good fortune. Having her "make a post on eBird every day" discipline pay off. Her name was entered in a random drawing pool of almost 8000 worldwide eBirders who placed 31 or more posts up on the site in the month of July. Hannah's name was drawn! She is now the proud owner of Zeiss binoculars, courtesy of the company sponsoring the incentive promotion. "Atta Girl, Hannah!"

Call For Speakers to give short presentations at our April 2025 meeting!

Have you seen something in the avian world that left you speechless? Do you have a short topic that might educate, enlighten or entertain your fellow Baird Club members?

We are revitalizing the popular "**Members' Night**". BOC's board is asking for participants to share in possibly three brief speaking segments. Do you have approximately 5 - 15 minutes to take us pictorially anywhere in the world of ornithology? As of this writing, one **approximately 20-minute segment has been claimed**. But there's plenty more presentation space available for YOU to be among our speakers.

Envision your topic; budget the time and specify how much you'll need, then stake your claim to at least 30 days worth of birding club immortality! First-come/first-served. No polished speaking skill necessary. Contact board member **Russ Hoffman by phone or e-mail (C: 484-794-7053, russhoff@yahoo.com)** to be a part of this always entertaining, eye-opening time of appreciation of "Ones Of Our Own!"

Upcoming BOC Meetings/Programs – September 2024 through May 2025

COVID Policy - your Board of Directors asks:

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

Meeting Location and time

- In-person meetings will be held at Nolde Forest Environmental Education Center in the McConnell Hall as in the past. The meetings start promptly at 7:30 pm
- ZOOM meeting invitation links will be emailed to BOC members in good standing several days beforehand. If you haven't received one by the Wednesday before the meeting you may email a request to Mike Slater at paplantings@gmail.com. The public is also very welcome participate by emailing a request for the meeting link. The meetings start promptly at 7:30 pm

September 13, 2024 (Zoom only)*

"Naturalized Parrots in the USA," Dr. Jennifer J. Uehling PhD, Assistant Professor of Biology, West Chester University and Cornell Lab blogger. The speaker will present her research on non-native parrots in the US.

October 11, 2024 (in person only) at Nolde Forest EEC

"A Visit to a Remote National Wildlife Refuge: Johnston Atoll," Mr. Bob Sprague, world traveler in search of birds and orchids. Bob will take us to one of the smallest, remotest, least visited NWR's anywhere. We will not only see bird species rarely viewed by the casual birder, but also be enlightened on the major role this atoll played in WW II and post-Cold War era US history.

November 8, 2024 (in person only) at Nolde Forest EEC

"My Patagonia: Scenery, Cryptic Mammals and Birds, Birds, Birds!" Ms. Sheila Martin, BOC president, speaker and traveler. A pictorial exploration of untamed springtime Patagonia, reliving an outrageously memorable jaunt through this stark and jaw dropping part of the globe.

December 13, 2024 (in person only) at Nolde Forest EEC

“Southern Africa: Birds and Wildlife,” Peter and Jane Wolfe, BOC and Mengel Natural History Society members. An incredible, exciting photo odyssey to the countries of South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana, with Cape Town, the Zambezi River, Chobe & Hwange National Parks featured. Annual joint meeting with MNHS.

January 10, 2025 (Zoom only)

“Winter Birds and the Grasslands They Depend On,” Mr. Joe Sebastiani, director of adult engagement & speaker, DE Nature Society. Mr. Sebastiani will discuss what mid-Atlantic avian residents need once the growing season has passed.

February 14, 2025 (Zoom only)

“Continental Migratory Connectivity and Conservation of the Evening Grosbeak,” Dr. David Yeany II PhD, PA Natural Heritage, Pittsburgh.

March 14, 2025 (in person only) at Nolde Forest EEC

- **Speaker to be announced.**

April 11, 2025 (in person only) at Nolde Forest EEC

Members’ Night - Rediscovered journals by Charlie Schaich from 1953 to 1957 offer insights into post-war birdwatching and hint at a rivalry between alpha birders Earl L. Poole and Maurice Broun. **Presentation by Bill Uhrich, BOC member and historian.**

Two other speakers to be persuaded and announced. See “Call for Speakers” above.

May 2025, BOC and Mengel Natural History Society Annual Dinner

Date, time and location to be announced.

"What Science Says About Old-Growth Forests & Why It Matters For Birds."

Joan Maloof PhD, Old-Growth Forest Network, Easton, MD founder.

BOC Field Trips & Bird Walks - Fall 2024 – Spring 2025

(Including our fall Tuesday Bird Walks on the 2nd & 4th Tuesdays of the month.)

Includes Fall Tuesday walks, Spring Tuesday walks to be announced in the Spring 2024 issue.

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/>

September 3, 2024 (Tuesday) - Schuylkill River Trail, Old Morlatton Village - 4:00 PM

This has become the annual kick-off gathering of the Fall season. Meet at the parking area of the Morlatton Village Historic District. Directions: Route 422 East past Douglassville to traffic light at Old River Rd. Turn right and go short distance and make first right onto Old Phila. Pike. Parking area is a short distance on left. Info Linda Ingram 610-621-7473. **Meeting Location: 480 Old Philadelphia Pike, Douglassville, PA 19518**

September 7, 2014 (Saturday) – Green Hills Preserve – 8:00 AM

Walk the diverse meadow/grassland habitat in this beautiful area of Berks County. Catch a look at summer residents before they depart for the year. Directions: Route 10 south past the Penske Complex to Route 568. Take a right and go a short distance to a right on Gunhart Rd. Parking lot on right. Info Art Zdancewic 610-858-3315. **Meeting Loc.: Natural Lands' Green Hills Preserve, 553 Gunhart Rd, Mohnton, PA**

September 10, 2024 (Tuesday) – Old Dreibelbis Farm – 8:00 AM

Another chance to experience this Berks County historic farm as we look for departing fall species. Also possible are the Red-headed Woodpeckers seen here a few months ago. Directions: Rte 222 north to round-a-bout at Moselem Springs. Go left on 662 about a mile and go right on Rte 143. Proceed 1.6 miles and look for the sign for the farm on the left. Take the lane on the left to the parking area. Info Rudy Keller 610-845-7310. **Location: 356 Hard Hill Rd, Hamburg, PA**

September 14, 2024 (Saturday) – Angora Fruit Farm – 8 AM

Stroll the abandoned apple orchard which is now a part of the Berks County Park System looking for fall warblers and flycatchers. This walk usually produces good looks at some of the more uncommon birds of this area. Directions: Route 12 (*Warren St. Bypass*) to Spring Valley Rd. exit. Go ½ mile to Mcknight's Gap Rd. on left. Follow this road uphill and down the other side. At stop sign make a right. In one block, take lane to the left to the farm. Info Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053. **Meeting Location: Angora Fruit Farm, Berks County Parks & Recreation, Angora Rd, Reading, PA 19606 40.3624, -75.8839**

September 17, 2024 (Tuesday) – Route 183 Hawk Watch – 8 AM

New venue for BOC group outing but long time hawk watching site in Berks County; second only to Hawk Mt. in number of raptors seen. Parking is limited so we will be carpooling. Meet at the Blue Marsh Sheidy Boat Launch (a.k.a. Blue Marsh North Boat Launch) area on Bernville Rd. (Rte 183) located a short distance on left after passing Old Church Rd. **Meeting Location: 5950-5998 Bernville Rd, Bernville, PA 19506**

The watching site is located on top of the Kittatinny Ridge off Rte 183, 3.1 miles past the intersection of Route 78 and 183. Limited parking is on the left, **watch for fast traffic!** Info Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053. **Appalachian National Scenic Trailhead Parking 40.5269, -76.2236, Additional Parking ¼ mi. down the hill at the State Game Lands parking lot on the right (east) side of Rte. 183 at 40.5250, -76.21794,**

September 18, 2024 (Wednesday) – State Hill Hawk Watch – 8 AM – 3 PM

Great time for seeing migrating Broad-winged Hawks, Bald Eagles, Ospreys. While not as productive as the mountain sites, there have been days with a variety of raptor species and good looks at low flying birds. Directions: State Hill Rd. to intersection with Brownsville Rd. Make left and go short distance to State Hill Boat Launch entrance on right. Park in the lot at top of hill. Info Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053. **Meeting Location: 585 Brownsville Rd, Sinking Spring, PA 19608**

September 21, 2024 (Saturday) – Berks County Heritage Center – 8 AM

Walk the area along the Tulpehocken Creek and the fields around the Center. Fall warblers should be around and beautiful Wood Ducks are usually here. Access the Heritage Center parking area on Red Bridge Rd. located next to Penn State St. Joseph's Hospital on Rte 183. The Center can also be accessed from Red Bridge Park on the west side of the Tulpehocken Creek. Info Liz Cates 610-926-3206. **Meeting Location: 2083 Tulpehocken Rd, Reading, PA 19610**

September 24, 2024 (Tuesday) – Hawk Mt. Sanctuary – 8 AM

Meet at HMS Visitor Center parking area, from which we will hike to the North Lookout. This is prime time for seeing migrating Broad-winged Hawks, which sometimes can be seen in the hundreds. If interested in carpooling, contact Russ Hoffman. **To walk the Hawk Mt. trails, you must have a membership or pay a daily trail fee.** Many BOC members go to Hawk Mt. yearly, so it may be fun to go as a group. Info Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053. **1700 Hawk Mountain Rd, Kempton, PA 19529**

September 28, 2024 (Saturday) – Union Meadows Park – 8 AM

An easy walk on a wide flat trail past fields and through a wooded area. Fall migrant songbirds. Connecticut Warbler has been seen here. Meet at Union Meadows East parking area. Directions: From Birdsboro, go east on Rt. 724 for 2 miles to sign on left. Linda Ingram 610-621-7473, Rudy Keller 610-845-7310. **Meeting Location: 100 Campbell Ford Road, Douglassville PA 19518**

October 1, 2024 (Tuesday) – Bombay Hook NWR – 9 AM

Shorebirds, herons, ducks, raptors and songbirds have been seen on previous trips. Meet at the Bombay Hook NWR headquarters visitor center, Smyrna, DE at 9 AM. Info Art Zdancewic 610- 858-3315. **Meeting Location: 2591 Whitehall Neck Rd, Smyrna, DE 19977**

October 5, 2024 (Saturday) – Kernsville Dam and Recreation Area – 8 AM

This wetland habitat continues to have sightings of species rarely seen in other parts of Berks County. Possible here are rails and unusual sparrows. Directions: Rte 61 North past Hamburg turnoff to light at Cabela's turnoff. Take right on Jetson Dr. and right on Industrial Dr. to left on Kernsville Dam Rd. Info Matt Wlasnieswski 484-577-3530 **Meeting Location at the parking lot for the John Bartram Trail, Hamburg, PA 19526, 40.5624, -75.9947**



*Inside the John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove.
Photo by Linda Ingram*

October 13, 2024 (Sunday) – John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove – 9 AM

Meeting in the parking lot of the center, we will bird field, water, and woodland border habitats. The Visitor Center is free Sundays 10 am-noon. The Historic House opens for docent-led tours at 1 pm. **Located at 1201 Pawlings Rd., Audubon PA (GPS the intersection of Audubon and Pawling Rds.).** Info Linda Ingram 610-621-7473

October 15, 2024 (Tuesday) – State Hill Hawk Watch – 8 AM – 3 PM

The variety of raptor species seen usually peaks at this time of year. Possibilities include accipiters, falcons, eagles, osprey and buteos. Bring lunch and beverages and hang out for a short time or all day. **See directions above.** Info Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053.

October 20, 2024 (Sunday) – L. Ontelaunee – 12 Noon

Waterfowl and later fall songbirds. Meet at the dam breast on Route 73 and carpool to the various birding areas of the lake. Info Rudy Keller 610-845-7310.

Meeting Location: at the west end of the dam on Rt. 73 between Rts. 61 and 222. (Lake Shore Dr, Shoemakersville, PA 19555.

October 26, 2024 (Saturday) – Hopewell Big Woods Trail – 8 AM

Walk the wide trail through grassland/meadow adjacent to woodlands where a variety of species can be easily seen. Meet at parking area for trail next to Union Township maintenance building, 165 Center Rd. Douglasville. From Birdsboro take Rte 73 east 2 miles to Center Rd., make right and go uphill to parking area on left. Info Rudy Keller 610-845-7310, Irene Taylor 610-856-1116. **Meeting Location: 165 Center Road, Douglassville PA 19518**

December 15, 2024 (Sunday) - Reading Christmas Bird Count

Compiler: Lucy Cairns ljanetcairns@gmail.com Cell: 610-223-4501

December 18, 2024 (Wednesday) – Blue Marsh L. - 2 PM

A trial outing at Blue Marsh Lake to check out the wintering gulls that gather on the beach. Last year around this time in addition to the many Ringed-billed Gulls and Herring Gulls, there were Lesser-black-backed and Iceland Gulls. The rare Glaucous Gull sometimes is a visitor here. **Dry Brooks Day Use Area, 1420 Palisades Dr, Leesport, PA 1953.** Info Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053.

December 20 (Friday) - Elverson Christmas Bird Count

Compiler: Jim Cook jim@elversonsupply.net
Cell: 610-587-7545 Work: 610- 286-5021

December 29 (Sunday) - Hamburg Christmas Bird Count

Compiler: Laurie Goodrich 570-943-3411 Ext. 106
goodrich@hawkmountain.org

January 1, 2025 (Wednesday) - New Year Birding – 8 AM

Kick off the New Year with a visit to various birding sites in Berks County with BOC members starting at E.J. Breneman Quarry and driving to other venues. Park at Cacoosing Meadows Park on Reedy Rd. Info Peter and Jane Wolfe 484-794-3703. **Meeting Location: 1049 Reedy Road, Sinking Spring PA**

January 4, 2025 (Saturday) - Bernville Christmas Bird Count

Compiler: Mike Slater paplantings@gmail.com

February 16, 2025 (Sunday) - Wintering Waterfowl at E. J. Breneman Quarry– 1 PM

Identification of the ducks and geese that winter in the county with good looks through members' scopes. Park at Cacoosing Meadows Park on Reedy Rd. Info Rudy Keller 610-845-7310 and Linda Ingram 610-621-7473. **Meeting Location: 1049 Reedy Road, Sinking Spring PA**

March 2, 2025 (Sunday) – Spring Waterfowl - 12 Noon

Drive and walk around Lake Ontelaunee looking for migrating waterfowl, gulls, and late wintering birds. Experienced birders with scopes will help you get good looks. A rare Little Gull was found on this outing a few years ago. Meet at dam breast on Rt. 73 and carpool to the various areas around the lake. Info Rudy Keller 610-845-7310. **Meeting Location: at the west end of the dam on Rt. 73 between Rts. 61 and 222. (Lake Shore Dr, Shoemakersville, PA 19555.**

March 15, 2025 (Saturday) - Green Hills Preserve – 8 AM

Walk this easily accessed grassland and edge habitat in search of late wintering birds and early spring migrants. Possibilities include Fox Sparrow and Purple Finch. Info Art Zdancewic 610-858-3315. **Meeting Loc.: Natural Lands' Green Hills Preserve, 553 Gunhart Rd, Mohnton, PA**

March 16, 2025 (Sunday) - French Creek State Park - Woodcock Stakeout – 7 PM

Watch and listen for the crepuscular American Woodcock and witness its spring courtship flight. Info Art Zdancewic 610-858-3315. **Meet at park office 843 Park Road, Elverson PA 19520.**

March 22, 2025 (Saturday) - Berks County Leisure Area – 8 AM

'Welcome Spring' Outing along the Tulpehocken Creek looking for early migrants. This walk is also the now annual 'CAKE' walk. Meander along the creek to Gring's Mill (where there are restrooms) and back to Leisure Area. Info Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053. **Meeting Location: Berks Leisure area at 1901 Tulpehocken Rd, Wyomissing, PA 19610**

March 25, 2025 (Tuesday) – 8 AM

Flash birdwalk to be announced.

March 29, 2025 (Saturday) - Blue Marsh L. Stilling Basin – 8 AM

Meet at the Blue Marsh Lake Stilling Basin parking area at the base of the Blue Marsh Dam at **1280 Palisades Dr, Leesport, PA**. Birding route to be selected from the multiple options available at this site. Info Liz Cates 610-926-3206.

April 5, 2025 (Saturday) - Gring's Mill Spring Outing – 8 AM

This walk was well attended last year as we strolled along the Tulpehocken Cr. upstream toward the Red Bridge, getting good looks at Pine and Palm warblers as well as the striking breeding plumaged Wood Ducks. Directions: Go east on Broadcasting Rd. in Wyomissing to dead end at the Tulpehocken Creek. Make a right and go ½ mile to parking entrance on left. Info Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053. **Meeting Location: Gring's Mill Recreation Area, 2083 Tulpehocken Rd, Reading, PA**

April 8, 2025 (Tuesday) - Kernsville Dam Desilting Basin - 8 AM

Good time of year to search for Berks County rarities in this maturing marsh habitat that was recently created. Rails and rare sparrows are possible here. Walk the wetland trail that leads to a woodland beside the Schuylkill River. Directions: R. 61 north to traffic light turnoff for Cabela's. Make a right onto Jetson Dr. and go right again on Industrial Dr. one mile to left on Kernsville Dam Rd. to parking area. Info Matt Wlasniewski 610-463-8845. **Meeting Location at the parking lot for the: John Bartram Trail, Hamburg, PA 19526, 40.5624, -75.9947**

April 12, 2025 (Saturday) - State Game Lands 280 - 8 AM

Walk the fields and edges of the southwest part of Blue Marsh Lake hoping to find early migrant species. This area produces impressive eBird species lists at this time of year. Directions: From the intersection of State Hill Rd. and Brownsville Rd. drive west 4 miles to a right turn on Justa Rd. Proceed ahead to dead end parking area. Info Liz Cates 610-926-3206. **Meeting Location: Justa Road 40.37066, -76.06973**

April 19, 2025 (Saturday) - Union Meadows Park - 8 AM

Join BOC members for an easy stroll through a varied habitat looking for migrant warblers, thrushes and other songbirds that travel northward along this riparian corridor. Meet at the Union Meadows East parking area 2 miles east of Birdsboro on Rt. 724. Info Linda Ingram 610-621-7473, Rudy Keller 610-845-7310. **Meeting Location: 100 Campbell Ford Road, Douglassville PA**

April 22, 2025 (Tuesday) - Angora Fruit Farm – 8 AM

Enjoy spring among the apple blossoms as we look for early migrant warblers and thrushes. The orchard borders woodland where a variety of species may be found. Directions: Rte 12 bypass to Spring Valley Rd. exit. Make a right and go ¼ mile to McKnight's Gap Rd. on left. Go up hill and down other side to stop sign. Make a right and go a short distance to the farm sign on the left. Info Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053. **Meeting Location: Angora Fruit Farm, Berks County Parks & Recreation, Angora Rd, Reading, PA 19606 40.3624, -75.8839**

April 26, 2025 (Saturday) - Hay Creek - 8 AM

Hear and hopefully see Louisiana Waterthrush along the streams of this varied habitat that attracts many different species of birds in the spring. Meet at the parking area at the closed south end of Hay Creek Rd. Directions: From the intersection of Rts. 724 and 568 in Gibraltar, take 568 west 1.5 miles and turn left on White Bear Rd. Go 4 miles past two stop signs and turn left at dead end. Follow Hay Creek Rd. to the parking area. Info Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053. **Meeting Loc.: Old 82 & Parking Area, 2000 Hay Creek Rd, Birdsboro, PA**

May 3, 2025 (Saturday)- Nolde Forest EEC – 8 AM

Meet at the Sawmill Parking Lot at Nolde Forest to hike the trails of this deciduous and coniferous forested habitat. Warblers, thrushes, flycatchers are usually found, and there is a possibility of seeing a Barred Owl. Directions: Rt. 625 South from Shillington to sign for Sawmill Parking Area on right. Info Linda Ingram 610-621-7473. **Meeting Location: 2910 New Holland Rd, Reading, PA**

May 4, 2025 (Sunday) - State Game Lands 106, Pine Swamp Rd. - 8 AM

Excellent location to find neotropical migrants at this time of year and hearing Ruffed Grouse conducting their spring mating ritual. Directions: From Hawk Mt. Sanctuary, go south 4 miles to a right turn on Pine Swamp Rd. and go 1 mile to lane on the right which leads to the parking area. From Rte 143 drive 4 miles on Hawk Mt Rd. to Pine Swamp Rd. on the left. Info Rudy Keller 610-845-7310 **Meeting Location: Pine Swamp RD, Kempton PA, 40.6262, -75.9520**

May 6, 2025 (Tuesday) - Exeter Scenic River Trail, Gibraltar - 8 AM

Walk the riverside path to see the migrating birds that use this riparian corridor on their northbound journey. Directions: At the traffic light at Rt. 724 and Gibraltar Rd. go north across the bridge to the lane at the end of the bridge. Make left and park. Info 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**

May 10, 2025 (Saturday) - Hamburg Reservoir – 8 AM

The terrain for this walk is uphill through forested habitat where migrating warblers, thrushes and other songbirds will be seen and heard. Directions: Rt. 61 north to light at turnoff for downtown Hamburg. Turn right and proceed to State St. in downtown Hamburg. Take a right on State St. and proceed 4 miles to a left turn on Reservoir Rd. Info Linda Ingram 610-621-7473. **Meeting Location: Pinnacle Trailhead access, 400 Reservoir Rd, Hamburg, PA**

May 13, 2025 (Tuesday) -Berks Nature/The Nature Place – 8 AM

Join BOC birders as they check out this wetland habitat on a spring morning. Directions: From Lancaster Ave. take Rt. 10 (Morgantown Rd.) 1 ½ miles to the sign on right for The Nature Place and Alvernia U. Go right to parking area. Info Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053. **Meeting Location: 575 St Bernardine St, Reading, PA 19607**

May 17, 2025 (Saturday) - Hopewell Furnace NHS – 8 AM

A new BOC favorite in its 3rd year, 2025's walk at Hopewell Furnace is moved back one week. E. Towhees, Balto. Orioles reliable; spring migrants, shorebirds likely at dam. Allow 2+ hrs. Coordinator: Sheila Martin 610-858-6005 **Directions:** Disregard HFNHS gate; still closed at 8a.m. Use **23 Clement Brooke Lane, Elverson 19520** exactly for GPS; turn at gravel driveway to their secondary/handicapped lot; orange cone indicates. Limited to ~8 spaces; if full, use grass expanse at start of driveway. Port-a-johns "iffy".

May 24, 2025 (Saturday) - Hopewell Big Woods Trail – 8 AM

A downhill walk on an easy trail through grassland bordered by woodland. Great place for special birds in Berks. Birds seen here in previous years include Yellow-breasted Chat, Blue Grosbeak, Grasshopper Sparrow, Prairie and Blue-winged Warblers. Directions: Park at the parking area for Union Meadows East, 2 miles east of Birdsboro. We will carpool up Center Rd. to the Big Woods Trailhead and bird downhill to the Union Meadows parking lot. 7473 **Meeting Location: 100 Campbell Ford Road, Douglassville PA** Alternatively: Turn right off Rt. 724 on Center Rd. and go uphill to parking on left if you prefer to park on your own and walk back uphill. Info Irene Taylor 610-856-1116, Rudy Keller 610-845-7310.



A Yellow-breasted Chat seen along the Hopewell Big Woods Trail, Spring 2024.

Photo by Russ Hoffman

May 31, 2025 (Saturday) - Dreibelbis Farm – 8 AM



A Red-headed woodpecker at Dreilbilbis Farm.

Photo by Russ Hoffman

After last year's very successful BOC outing here, we will be exploring this historic area again. Hopefully the Red-headed Woodpeckers are here nesting again this year. Direction: Rte 222 north to round-about at Moselem Springs. Go left on Rt. 662 about a mile to Rt. 143. Make a right on Rt. 143 and go 1.6 miles to Dreibelbis Farm sign on left. This is a field lane. Proceed on lane to house and park. Info Dan Brennan 484-336-0455. **Location: 356 Hard Hill Rd, Hamburg, PA**

June – August 2025 bird, Butterfly and dragonfly walks will be listed in the spring newsletter or on the BOC website as they are finalized. <https://bairdornithological.club/field-trips> **(GPS addresses are included as given by Google Maps)*

Past Field Trip Reports

BOC New Year Bird Tour, by Peter & Jane Wolfe

A New Year and birders are up early with clean slates, eager to find as many species as they can for 2024. We met at Breneman's Quarry at 8 AM. It was a little cooler than 2023 requiring gloves and ski hats for most participants including Lucy C., Liz C., Linda I., Susie D., Hannah S., Nancy K., Carol H., Deanne J., with Peter and Jane W. our guides. This



January 2024 New Year's Day birders. Photo by Peter Wolfe

is a driving tour of popular birding spots near Reading, in Berks County, PA.

Some highlights of the morning included an American Wigeon, Redhead, and both Ruby and Golden-crowned Kinglets at Breneman's Quarry. At Blue Marsh Lake State Hill, Jane found a Long-tailed Duck and a Common Loon, which were both viewed in the scope! Surprisingly, the Visitor Center at Blue Marsh was closed. Dry Brooks Day Use Area included Belted Kingfisher, Ring-billed and Herring Gulls. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, White-throated Sparrows, Northern Mockingbird, and Cedar Waxwings feasting on crabapples were near the Sensory Trail bird feeders. We proceeded along Bright School Road and Belleman's Church Road, where we saw a Downy Woodpecker building a nest, but no White-crowned Sparrows again this year. By noon our group had dwindled so we returned to Breneman's Quarry. A great start to the New Year of 44 species which were reported on the eBird PA Bird Atlas site.

Hopewell Furnace National Historical Site – May 11, 2024, By Sheila Martin

Hoping to improve our 7:00 a.m. 2023 gray-skies memory of this restarted outing, ten BOC birders and friends convened at this national historical site's rear parking spaces one hour later and, benefiting from far better morning light, immediately enjoyed non-stop looks of such a variety of nicely posing, cooperative birds, that we had trouble, if you can call it that, even getting off the parking lot! Though a mere 56 degrees, sunny, blue skies prevailed along the 1.75-mile loop. The journey includes meadowlands, small historic structures on open lawn, trailheads flanked by mid-height trees leading onward into a tall, dense forest bounded farther still with almost impossibly thick scrub!

In such a habitat mix, one proceeds to Hopewell Lake, the crown jewel of this park-within-a-park, replete with dam breast; mossy clumps & wetland vegetation plus splashing, tumbling water, serving as a backdrop for Barn & Northern Rough-winged Swallows. From the same stance, one can scan up the narrow beach and sometimes see surprise shorebirds. Our target this year was Spotted Sandpiper!

Fifty-four species were gleaned from the walk. Great Crested Flycatcher opened things up, followed by a score of Baltimore Orioles. I was pleased to see so generous a mix of migrants: Yellow, Black-throated Green and Black-&-White Warblers, Warbling Vireo, Ovenbirds *actually SEEN*, Hooded Warbler and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. It was reassuring to see Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, since folks' impression was that they'd been scarce this spring.

Red-bellied and Pileated Woodpeckers well satisfied us adoring fans with drumming. A preoccupied Eastern Phoebe pair, nesting, was a highlight to watch. But we'll have to do it again in '25, hoping to encounter Eastern Towhee, usually a handsome good bet, but missed entirely in May.

Hopewell Big Woods Trail – June 1, 2024, By Irene Taylor

Saturday, June 1st was sunny, clear and cool, a great day to walk on the Big Woods Trail. Rudy Keller led about 15 BOC members through a meadow blooming with wildflowers, and we were treated to a respectable 47 species. Some of the highlights were two Willow Flycatchers, Yellow-breasted Chats singing in the undergrowth, a Chestnut-sided Warbler, and no less than 8 Indigo Buntings. The eBird checklist can be viewed online.

Birding with Baird at the Historic Dreibelbis Farm – June 15, 2024, By Dan Brennan

Responding to an invitation by Mark Dreibelbis, President of the Dreibelbis Farm Historical Society, members of the BOC joined with several "farm" association members to gain familiarity with the farm's habitat and birdlife. The preserved farm consists of 180+ acres. It is bordered by the Maiden Creek through primarily deciduous woodland. There are several small streams, a marsh-like pond and swamp land. Wooded fencerows and thickets are interspersed among cultivated fields and grasslands. Trails and pathways are evident

throughout. The 15 birders who participated in the 2+ hour walk covering an abbreviated .3 miles, recorded 44 species. An additional 6 species were noted by recorder, Rudy Keller and others. Highlights of the walk were 5 species of flycatchers: Eastern Wood-Pewee, Eastern Phoebe, Willow Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird and Great Crested Flycatcher. An abundance of dead and decaying ash trees throughout the property has resulted in habitation and observation of the Downy, Hairy, Red-Bellied, Red-Headed and Pileated Woodpeckers. Also, participants were informed by Mark Dreibelbis that a nesting pair of American Kestrels successfully produced 4 nestlings that were banded earlier in the week by the PA Game Commission's nestbox program bander. At the end of the outing, he invited BOC to return for future walks. BOC is planning to add one or more at the farm annually.

Berks County Birds Dec, 2023 – Feb, 2024 by Rudy Keller

Abbreviations: Blue Marsh L. (BML), E. J. Breneman Quarry (BQ), Hawk Mt. Sanctuary (HMS), L. Ontelaunee (LO), Pheasant Valley Farm, Robesonia (PVF), Schuylkill R. (SR), Christmas Bird Counts: Reading (RCBC), Hamburg (HCBC), Bernville (BCBC).

Mild fall weather again lasted through Dec and the CBC season. There were two brief wintry periods with light snow cover and frozen lakes, one about mid-Jan and the other in mid-Feb, but most of the winter was open. Migration of waterfowl and hardy songbirds like crows and blackbirds was underway by mid-Feb.

Tens of thousands of **Snow Geese** wintered in Oley Valley farmland from mid-Jan through Feb, stopping traffic as they covered corn fields and overflowed roosts at Gotwals pond and flooded limestone quarries. Traveling with them were at least two **Ross's Geese** 1/30 – 2/9 (m.obs.), continuing an exceptional fall and winter for seeing this prized bird. An earlier Ross's was with Canada Geese at BQ 12/8-11 (RK, RH, photo), long before many Snows were here. Another was with 5000 Snow Geese near Hamburg 2/16 (MW). A **Snow Goose X Ross's Goose** hybrid was with the huge SNGO flock at Gotwals pond 2/1 (RK). A **Greater White-fronted Goose** was among Canada Geese at Gotwals pond, Oley 12/19 (RK, RH; photo) and again 1/10, 11, enough time for many birders to see it. Birders patient enough to scan Canada Goose flocks made several counts of one to three **Cackling Geese** at various places through the winter. A **Snow Goose X Canada Goose** hybrid was seen a few times with CANG in the Oley Valley 12/12 – 2/2 (RK, JSo, et al.; photos).

Mute Swan numbers have remained low since the culling of the flock of about 30 birds at LO about 10 years ago, and the more recent draining of Bernhart's Dam. Single birds and a few pairs were reported at a few ponds. Among the waterfowl pushed south by the Jan freeze were three **Trumpeter Swans**, seen and photographed with five **Tundra Swans** at LO 1/18 (AW, AS, TU, et al.), the same day they left. Trumpeters were last reported in Berks in 2016. Tundra Swans were still migrating south in Dec (211 passed HMS 12/11) and Jan (see above). Small flocks of up to 50 birds were already heading back north by late February.



Three Trumpeter Swans (Left) with 2 Tundra Swans (right) seen at Lake Ontelaunee in January. . Photo by Todd Underwood

Before the onset of mild winters, almost all **Wood Ducks** had left by early Dec and didn't return till late Feb. This season one or two were reported at each of seven places between late Dec and early Feb. Birders occasionally found



A mallard x N. Pintail Hybrid. (Upper Right) Photo by Todd Underwood

one to four **N. Shovelers** at various ponds through Feb. The wintering **Gadwall** flock that moves among ponds near LO numbered about 30 birds. In the years when Moselem Springs was their favored wintering site, this flock often contained over 100 birds. For unknown reasons, Moselem Springs has become inhospitable to Gadwalls and they are seldom seen there now. A **Eurasian Wigeon** drake was at LO 2/23 – 29 (m.obs.), a short visit for this rarity, which in some previous

years has stayed weeks or months. It arrived with the first spring surge of 253 **Am. Wigeons** and moved on with most of them. **Am. Black Duck**, still at a low point in its decline, was counted in single digits on most checklists. This winter's high count was of only 52 at LO 1/27 (TU). An **Am. Black Duck X Mallard hybrid** drake was seen among hundreds of Mallards at BQ 12/12, 1/26 and 2/15 (RK, JSo). Another was at LO 1/27 and 2/10 (RK). This hybrid has been seen annually for many years. **N. Pintail**, scarce all winter, surged to 202 at LO 2/23 (RK), part of a large movement of ducks. A **Mallard X N. Pintail hybrid** drake was photographed at LO 2/27 (TU) as it migrated with about 100 **Mallards**. Counts of the **Green-winged Teal** flocks moving among shallow ponds sometimes reached 16 – 18 birds (RK, TU).

The Aythya diving ducks, most easily found early in the year, appeared on many checklists. The Jan. storm brought 34 **Canvasbacks** to LO 1/16 (JH), eclipsing the other two counts of single birds at LO 1/18 (JR, TU, AW) and 2/29 (PJW). One to 13 **Redheads** were reliably seen at BQ all winter. They also visited other places, including 24 seen at LO 1/18 (TU, JR). Given a wide choice of ponds, **Ring-necked Ducks** picked some favorites. A farm pond on Zweig Rd. near Shoemakersville attracted 40 – 100 on several days in Jan (MJ, AW, MW), but many other ponds also received visits. Numbers rose in mid-Feb, and 390 RNDU were part of the migratory push at LO 2/23 (RK). One or two **Greater Scaup** and one to seven **Lesser Scaup** wintering at BQ helped fill out many checklists. Both species peaked at about 20 birds at LO during the Jan freeze 1/16 (JH, et al.). A few birders cautiously chose eBird's **Greater/Lesser Scaup** option to identify distant birds instead of guessing at species. Winter often brings a few **Long-tailed Ducks**. One was at BML 1/1-4 and another 1/21 (JSp, et al.). Two were at LO 2/16 (JH) and one 2/23 (RK). Of many **Bufflehead** counts at the lakes, the highest was of 49 birds at LO 2/13 (TU). Small numbers of **Common Goldeneyes** were seen at the lakes all winter. A group of eight at BQ and BML 1/26 (RK) was the largest reported. **Hooded Mergansers** were seen in flocks of a few to 50 at LO, The SR and many ponds. **Common Merganser** was by far the most common duck. A raft of 1000 was at LO 1/31 (RK). One to three **Red-breasted Mergansers** were teased out of the COME flocks at LO on various days from 1/28 – 2/13 (m.ob.). One to 45 **Ruddy Ducks** were listed on 84 checklists at BQ 12/7 – 2/25. The average count was 16.

Generally, **Wild Turkeys** were few and far between, but there were two flocks of decent size, one of 40 near Adams Hotel 1/28 (TU) and the other of 24 in Albany Twp. 2/8 (HW). A **Ruffed Grouse** on the HCBC 12/30 and one at Hamburg Reservoir 1/3 (KG) were both on the Kittatinny Ridge, the only place they are reliably found. Because lakes and ponds remained mostly ice free, there were a few more reports of **Pied-billed Grebes** than usual. These were mostly singletons at five locations. A **Horned Grebe** was at Kaercher Creek Park, Hamburg 12/3. The Jan storm brought one to three, depending on observer, to LO 1/18 and one to BML 1/20-23 (m.ob.). The only reported **Red-necked Grebe** was at Kaercher Cr. Park, Hamburg with one of the **Horned Grebes** 12/3 (KG). Birders visiting the **Eurasian Collared-Dove** colony in Shartlesville early in the year often record some of the highest annual dove counts. Near a feeder, MW recorded 11 doves 1/4 and 13 on 1/12, and the season's highest count was of 17. We still don't know where these birds go during the breeding season, when counts in town are lower. Most counts of the annually wintering **Am. Coot** flock at BQ were of 10 or fewer birds, but one observer saw 15 on 1/27 (AP).

The number of locations reporting **Killdeer** rose from a few in Dec and Jan to about 18 in Feb when migration got underway. Given that the ground was never more than lightly frozen, it seems probable that some **Am. Woodcock** wintered. A bird was seen quietly foraging at French Cr. State Park 12/23 (KC). Calling and displaying had commenced by 2/5, after which birds were reported from at least seven places, often multiple birds per location. A birder using a parabolic mic detected 22 Woodcock at SGL 280 on 2/23 (AP). This was apparently a migratory surge (see ducks above), as numbers before and after that date were much lower (AP). **Wilson's Snipe** followed the Killdeer playbook. The hotspot for them was a spring on Snyder Rd., Heidelberg Twp., where a few in early winter increased to 23 on 2/21 (EB). The loud call of a **Greater Yellowlegs** rang through the fog at BML 1/26 (RK), another of very few winter records.

Late migrating **Bonaparte's Gulls** included three at LO 12/11 (RK), one at BML 12/12 and three there on 1/4 (IT, AS, AW, PJW). A **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was at Conestoga Landfill, New Morgan 12/29 and 1/30 (FH). One to four were sometimes seen at BML 12/26 to 2/29 (m.ob.) and two were at LO 2/11 (JSp). These numbers are in the low normal range. **Great Black-backed Gull** made only a few appearances. One was at LO 12/17 (PJW), three were seen on the BCBC, one was at the Snyder Rd. site 2/21 (EB) and one to four, depending on observer, were at BML 1/2 & 3. A light first winter **Iceland Gull** was seen at BML 1/1-13 (m.ob.; photos). It was counted on the BCBC 1/4, its seventh appearance in 39 years. A **Herring Gull X Lesser Black-backed Gull** hybrid was at BML1/5 (RK).

A **Red-throated Loon** at LO 1/16 (JH) was another one-day gift of the Jan mini-winter. Two **Common Loons** migrated over HMS 12/11. Birds found on the lakes included one at BML 12/20 (RK), another at BML 1/1-21 (m.ob.) and one at LO 1/2 (AW). One of the BML birds made it onto the BCBC, just the third in 39 years. In the recent past, **Double-crested Cormorants** would have left by early Dec and not returned till Mar or Apr. This year one wintered at LO, five were seen flying over BML 1/7 (BL) and one was near BML 1/27 (BL). A tardy **Great Egret** was photographed at Ammon Rd. wetlands near New Morgan 12/7 (S&F).

The open winter made it easier for **N. Harriers** to hunt, and these hawks were reported, mostly as singletons, at about 15 places. Birds were repeatedly seen in vole producing grassland habitat at SGL 280, PVF, and Centennial Rd, Topton. A **Rough-legged hawk** migrated past HMS 12/9. A light morph bird visited PVF and nearby S. Heidelberg Twp. 1/21-29 (BL, RH, m.ob.; photos), an increasingly rare occurrence. **Bald Eagle** keeps climbing the charts, having set record highs of 15 on the RCBC 12/17, 24 on the HCBC 12/20 and 22 on the BCBC 1/4. The three **Golden Eagles** recorded on the HCBC were migrating along the Kittatinny Ridge. A **Short-eared Owl** was seen on Ridge Rd. near LO 2/19 (AW). One or two were seen in the prime grassland habitat at PVF 12/17 till 1/22 (BL, m.ob.), where they are most consistently found. Using playback, birders found two N. Saw-whet Owls on the RCBC 12/17 and three on the HCBC 12/30. One was heard at SGL 110, Northkill Gap 12/14 (BL) and one at LO 1/2 (AW).

Red-headed Woodpeckers were found on all three CBC's, mostly in places where they are year-round residents. The mild, almost snowless conditions favored overwintering by Am. Kestrels, which were reported from about 50 locations, more even than last year. **Merlins** were found on all three CBC's and single birds were reported at 13 locations. Some of these were one-time sightings, but a few birds apparently held winter territories. Reading's **Peregrine Falcons** could be seen on their urban eyries all winter. Their hunting forays may have accounted for some of the six Peregrine sightings outside Reading this season.

An **E. Phoebe** was seen at Bright School Rd. near BML 12/31 and 1/10 (JSp). Feb survivors were one at Union Meadows Park 2/1 (JT) and one at Dunkel's Church Rd., Albany Twp. 2/27 (CFa). Berks County's first **Ash-throated Flycatcher** was found along the SR Trail in Reading 12/14 (BU). Though sometimes hard to find, it was seen and photographed along the river for the next few days (m.ob.) and was last seen 1/1 (RH). The **Tropical Kingbird** discovered in Nov squeaked into this period. It was last reported flycatching from the sunny side of a silo 12/1 & 2 (MW) on one of the three adjoining farms where it was originally found.

As its expansion into the lowlands has continued, **Common Raven** set record counts of 43 on the HCBC 12/30 and 21 on the BCBC 1/4. Its record count of 39 on the RCBC was set in 2019. Nine **Tree Swallows** seen at LO 2/28 (JDeB) became the earliest on record. Single **Red-breasted Nuthatches** passing North Lookout, HMS 12/10, 11 & 30 continued a very light fall movement. One found on the BCBC 1/4 and one or two at four feeders in Feb were the only others reported. A **House Wren** was found on the RCBC in Reading 12/17 (JB). **Single Gray Catbirds** were reported at 11 places, some

through Feb. Four of the much rarer **Brown Thrashers** were seen, two of them well into Feb. These mimids, many **Am. Robins**, **Hermit Thrushes** and **E. Bluebirds** survived quite well due to mild weather and an abundant regional fruit crop on native and invasive exotic shrubs and vines. Light snow cover from the Jan storm made **Am. Pipits** visible by forcing them, along with **Horned Larks**, out of the fields onto roads. The largest flock reported was of 135 on Mertz Rd., Lyons 1/7.

As has been the case during many previous small irruptions, more northern finches were seen along the Kittatinny Ridge at HMS than elsewhere in the county. A light but steady movement of **Purple Finches** continued through Dec into Jan, but by Feb only a few feeders hosted two to eight of these birds. **Red Crossbills** at the rate of one to three per day passed North Lookout, HMS 12/12, 14 & 30. Ten were seen in the HMS forest 1/27 (CFe). One was at Kaercher Cr. Park, Hamburg 2/19 (KG). Small, widely scattered flocks of **Pine Siskins** were occasionally found in numbers similar to those of Purple Finches. A few early **Lapland Longspurs** were found in the Oley Valley, one 12/15 and three 12/17 (JSo). Most of the other reports were of one or two birds seen when the Jan and Feb snows pushed birds to the roadsides. In spite of generally snowless conditions, a few **Snow Buntings** came south. Early birds were two in the Oley Valley 12/15 (JSo) and one at Mertz Rd. 12/15 (DB). One or two were sometimes seen with Horned Larks at Mertz Rd. 1/8 – 2/19 (m.ob.), and one was near Hamburg 1/20 (DA).

A **Clay-colored Sparrow** seen on Five Locks Rd. near Shoemakersville 12/30, 31 and 1/3 (DK) was the first recorded on the HCBC. **Chipping Sparrow** continued its upward trend in winter numbers. A flock of six was near Bethel 12/30 (NF). A flock of seven set a count record on the BCBC ¼. All other counts were of one or two birds, many at feeders for weeks, at about 20 locations. **Am. Tree Sparrow** passed a milestone on its long downhill trend of winter occurrence. For the first time in the 112-yr. history of the RCBC, no Am. Tree Sparrows were found. In stark contrast, the RCBC's high count of this sparrow was 1647 in 1947. They were also missed on the BCBC for the first time in its 39-yr. history. Just seven were counted on the HCBC, whose high count was of 1467 in 1985. The birds still winter here, but singly or in small flocks that are harder to find, and then often by luck.

In the current run of warm winters, **Fox Sparrow** is becoming more routine in occurrence. About half of this winter's 18+ reports were made in Dec while birds were probably still migrating. But seven checklists reported birds still here in Jan and Feb. A large uncut weedy field in the Oley Valley attracted many **Savannah Sparrows** this winter, evidenced by a count of 80 along the roadside 2/18 after a light snowfall (JSo). **Lincoln's Sparrow** is accidental in winter. Two of the three previous records are of birds that were found on CBC's, one on the HCBC in 1977 and the other on the BCBC in 1992. Two more CBC's joined this small group this winter. A Lincoln's Sparrow found in the Oley Valley during the RCBC 12/17 (RK) was the first recorded on that count. A bit further south, a Lincoln's Sparrow found at Morgantown Industrial Park 12/22 (KS) was the first recorded on the Elverson CBC. More **E. Towhees**, like Fox Sparrows, are staying later or wintering as the climate warms. One to three EATO were seen at each of about 16 places on dates spanning the period.

One to six **E. Meadowlarks** were seen in a hay field at Goose Run Park near Pottstown 2/17-25 (LM). One was in Heidelberg Twp. 1/21 (BL), one at PVF 2/28 (RH) and one at Blue Mt. Academy 2/29 (AW). A **Rusty Blackbird** was in Boyertown 2/12 (RW). Two were at Union Meadows Park 2/4 (RK, RH, LI, LC).

It is exceptional to find six warbler species in one winter. Five have occurred before; one was unexpected. An **Orange-crowned Warbler** was near Topton 12/16 (PS). Another photographed in Wyomissing Park 2/12 (JC) had been near sapsucker wells for about a week. A **Common Yellowthroat** was on the Sacony Cr. Trail in Kutztown 12/12 (TU). A molting **male Am. Redstart** was seen along the SR Trail in Reading by Ash-throated Flycatcher seekers 12/24 (BU) till 1/1 (m.ob.; photos). There is apparently just one previous winter record. Two western **Palm Warblers** continuing from Nov were at Willow Run Farm 12/1-14 (NW, MSc). A **Pine Warbler** was at BML 12/28 (BL). Small numbers of **Yellow-rumped Warblers** were found along the SR all winter. The largest flock of 11 was at Daniel Boone Homestead 2/10.

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Berks County Birds, Spring 2024 compiled by Rudy Keller

Abbreviations: E. J. Breneman Quarry (BQ), Blue Marsh L. (BML), Gotwals pond, Oley (GP), Hawk Mt. Sanctuary (HMS), School Rd. pond, Fleetwood (SRP), Kernsville Dam & Recreation Area (KDRA), Kittatinny Ridge (KR), L. Ontelaunee (LO), State Game Lands 106, Pine Swamp Rd. (SGL 106).

During their rare visits, **Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks** tend to favor small private ponds. A flock of 9 landed in trees above such a pond near Charming Forge 5/12, dropped to the lawn around the pond, and stayed till 5/13 (KL; photos on eBird), a short visit from a spectacular yard bird.

Most overwintering and early migrating geese, swans and ducks left or moved through in Feb and early Mar as the mild winter faded into spring. A **Greater White-fronted Goose** and an apparent **Greater White-fronted Goose X Canada Goose** were with about 150 **Canada Geese** at GP 3/6 (JSo). There were 53 **Tundra Swans** at LO 3/13 (RK), the last sizable flock reported. A flock of 27 **Blue-winged Teal** at a seasonal wetland near Leesport 4/15 (PJW) provided this spring's high count. A pair lingered in a retention basin at Hamburg Commerce Park till 5/11 (RK). A **Eurasian Wigeon** drake first seen at LO 2/23 stayed till 3/3 (m.obs.). The seasonal high count of 325 **American Wigeons** was made at LO 3/1 (RK). Most left within a few days, taking their Eurasian Wigeon relative with them. An **American Black Duck X Mallard** drake was at GP 4/11, 15 (RK) and another at Bernhart's L. 4/25 (RH). This season's first and last **N. Pintails** were 12 at LO 3/4 (RK). A flock of 80 **Green-winged Teal** at LO 3/23 (JSo) was the largest counted this spring, but 50 were still on migration at SRP 4/17 (S&F, AS).

The same migratory surge that brought Am. Wigeons (above) also brought 420 **Ring-necked Ducks** to LO 3/1 (RK). Kleptoparasitism was clearly on display, as the wigeons rushed the Ring-necks to steal the aquatic plants they brought up from their dives. The **scaup** were uncommon, counted in single or low double digits. **Canvasback** was absent. There were no large rain induced fallouts of the other diving ducks. A pair of **Black Scoters** at LO 4/20 (RK, JSp) were the only scoters reported. There were 3 Long-tailed Ducks at LO 3/15 (JR), but most were seen at BML, where 15 were counted 3/23 (BL), 10 on 3/31 (BL), and 4 on 4/14 (DH). A modestly sized flock of 50 **Buffleheads** at LO 3/15 (JR) was the largest counted this spring. One or 2 **Common Goldeneyes** were seen at LO till 3/13 (RK).

Most **Common Mergansers** and **Hooded Mergansers** departed in Feb, leaving a few stragglers and breeders. As in many previous years, counts of **Red-breasted Mergansers** peaked after the crowds of Common Mergansers had left. Rain dropped 31 Red-breasted Mergansers at LO 4/15 (RK), the largest of several flocks reported in Apr and May. Spring's high count of **54 Ruddy Ducks** was made at BQ, their overwintering site, 4/6 (RK). Stragglers were 3 at BQ 5/11 (RK) and one at Shartlesville 5/13 (DBr). This duck bred at Glen Morgan L. IBA in the 1990's, but apparently nowhere since.

The remnant **Ruffed Grouse** population on the KR yielded the usual few reports. Single birds were detected at SGL 106 on 5/3 (DBa), and at HMS 4/23 and 5/13 (DBa). A **Pied-billed Grebe** lingered long in a shallow pond at KDRA 4/7 – 5/11 (KG, RK). The count of 12 **Horned Grebes** at BML 4/5 (RH) was the largest made this spring. The observer who counted 7 **Eurasian Collared-Doves** at the Shartlesville colony 5/18 (AM) tried but failed to find evidence of breeding, which has yet to be confirmed. **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** appeared where expected, though sometimes weeks later than usual. There were 11 reports of **Black-billed Cuckoos**, mostly single birds, at various places 5/1-27. Eight **Common Nighthawks** at Union Meadows Park 5/14 (JR) and 16 at KDRA 5/18 (TU) were migrating north along the Schuylkill R. Single migrants were reported at various other places 5/1-30. Up to 6 singing **E. Whip-poor-wills** were heard at SGL 110, Northkill Gap starting 5/19. This has become the go-to place to find this species in Berks.

Rails were unusually well reported. A **King Rail** was discovered foraging in and around an overgrown retention basin



on the campus of Kutztown University 4/16 (TU; photos on eBird). It was re-discovered 4/25, 26 (TU, RK, et al.) in another basin in the middle of campus, where it often left the basin to forage on the lawn, undisturbed by dozens of passing students and the slow passage of a robo-mower. It was last seen 4/28 (BL, AP) in still another small campus wetland. King Rail bred at Blue Marsh in 1900 and again at LO in the early 1930's and probably in 1957. After that, it was not recorded till one was heard by Ken Lebo at Glen Morgan L. IBA in 1994 and more recently in flight by a Motus tower. A planted cattail marsh at KDRA has attracted rails for several years. Five **Virginia Rails**, two pairs and a single bird, were detected there using playback 5/22 (AWi). One

King Rail at Kutztown University.

Photo by Todd Underwood

was heard in a cattail filled retention basin at Hamburg Commerce Park 5/11 (RK). One to 3 **Sora** were seen or heard at KDRA on various dates from 4/21 till 5/22 (m,obs.). The season's only **Sandhill Crane** was spotted flying high over BML 4/13 (BL). A drizzly northeaster grounded two notable shorebird species. Two **Black-bellied Plovers** waited out the rain in a flooded field on Linden Rd. near Topton 5/10 (RK). A **Willet** of the eastern subspecies spent that day at BML (m.obs.; photos on eBird). The few Willets previously recorded in Berks were not definitively attributed to a subspecies. **Dunlin** made a good showing. The earliest (in gray winter plumage) was at Linden Rd. 4/2 (RK). One to 4 breeding plumaged birds were at SRP on various days from 4/19 – 5/29 (m.obs.), and 4 were near Topton 5/10 (RK). A large group of 40 **Wilson's Snipe** at Ammon Rd. wetland near New Morgan 4/15 would not have been seen if not flushed by a **N. Harrier** (S&F). The 9 other shorebird species reported belong in the steady regulars category.



An Eastern Willet at Blue Marsh Lake was seen by many birders during its one day visit to Berks. Photo by Russ Hoffman

The high count of 40 **Bonaparte's Gulls** was made at LO 4/16 (RK), their peak migration time. Most overwintering gulls left in Feb. The last big surge of 5000 **Ring-billed Gulls** settled in fields around GP 3/3 (JSo). Traveling with them were 5 **Lesser Black-billed Gulls** (JSo). One to 4 **Caspian Terns** quartered BML on several days between 4/5 and 4/18 (RH, et al.). Two Caspian Terns were at LO 5/1 (AW). Single **Forster's Terns** made brief visits to BML 4/12, 18 (RH). Three **Common Terns** rested on buoys at BML 5/10 (AS) and one was at LO 5/15 (AW). Experiencing no stormy fallouts, **Common Loons** trickled through over the long span of 3/23 till 5/23. Most **Double-crested Cormorants** passed through in early April, with a high count of only 130 at LO 4/6 (RK).

The only reported **American Bitterns** were a bird near Kempton 4/6 (HW) and a flyover at the Hamburg Walmart 4/27 (DH). A very early **Black-crowned Night-Heron** in juvenile plumage was spotted roosting in a spruce at LO 3/9 (TU). An

adult was in Lower Heidelberg Twp. 3/29 (BL). One to 4 were at the LO spillway 4/27 through May. **Little Blue Herons** in breeding plumage usually appear only in spring. One was admired by many birders at Lowland Rd. pond, Hamburg 4/14-19. Four migrating **Great Egrets**, two of them flyovers, were seen at four places 4/18, 20 and 5/19, 27 (IT, TU, et al.). Two **Glossy Ibis** foraged in a small grass and sedge wetland near Oley 4/30 (AS, RK).

Most raptors were seen at HMS. See David Barber's statewide summary of the spring raptor migration in this issue of Pennsylvania Birds. A very early **Osprey** was at LO 3/1 (DBr). A well described imm. **Golden Eagle** migrated along the base of the KR in Albany Twp. 3/17 (BW). Two birders on Baldy Hill, District Twp. tallied 9 migrating raptor species in two hours 4/15, including 13 **Sharp-shinned Hawks** and 146 **Broad-winged Hawks** (CE, RK). The birds were moving northeast along the ridge on a southwest wind. A **Short-eared Owl** was seen near Kutztown 3/12 (TU). One or 2 were seen at their overwintering site at Pheasant Valley Farm, Robesonia 3/31 till 4/10 (BL, AP).

Red-headed Woodpeckers were reported at about 30 places, a surprising number. Some of them may appear on atlasing checklists this summer. **Olive-sided Flycatchers** crowned snags at five places on five dates between 5/14 and 5/27 (m.obs.). There were **24 Bank Swallows** around nest holes in mounds of sand at Haines & Kibblehouse Quarry, Birdsboro 5/8 (JR). This remains their only known nesting colony. After being scarce in fall and winter, few **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were reported heading back north. One or 2 stopped at each of 8 places 3/3 till 4/28. The only reported **Gray-cheeked Thrush** was at SGL 280 on 5/2 (BL). A birder listening for migrants heard 13 nocturnal flight calls of **Swainson's Thrush** near Pleasantville on the evening of 5/20 (AS). Diurnally, this thrush was less common than usual. Last fall, few **Purple Finches** came south and fewer overwintered. A small flurry of reports, mostly in Apr but extending to mid-May, documented their return trip. Numbers were low, single birds to flocks of fewer than 10. Even fewer **Pine Siskins** were seen, the latest in Henningsville 5/13 (PS).

Only a few **Fox Sparrows** were reported in Mar and Apr, causing some birders to comment on their scarcity. **Grasshopper Sparrows** began returning in mid-Apr and became quite common in good habitat, evidenced by counts of 4-13 per location in several Albany Twp. hayfields in May (BB). **Vesper Sparrows** also returned to farmland in mid-Apr. Three were in Lower Heidelberg Twp. 4/23-29 (BL), and one or 2 in the Albany Twp. fields in May (BB). Grass pastures in the Fleetwood area held up to 6 **Savannah Sparrows** in May (NW). Weedy fallow fields in the Oley Valley that had hosted many Savannah Sparrows in winter still held 20 birds 4/20 (JSo). These fields have since been tilled and planted with corn, illustrating the transiency of grassland habitat in farmland. **Lincoln's Sparrows**, harder to find in spring than fall, were reported twice. One was near Douglassville 5/12 (JSo) and one in Hamburg 5/17, sadly a window kill (MW). **Yellow-breasted Chats** were reported at 8 locations, including the known breeding sites, starting 4/30.

Bobolinks returned to grass hayfields starting 4/29, with up to 10 along Monument Rd., Hamburg, 16 along Mountain Rd. in Albany Twp. (BB), and 8 at Goose Run Park near Pottstown (LM) in May. Up to 4 **E. Meadowlarks** shared each of the Bobolink fields. Small numbers of **Rusty Blackbirds** were seen



Golden-winged Warbler, Male. Photo by Brian Lineaweaver. Details on the following page.

at 7 places from 3/7 till 4/29. Most counts were of one to 6 birds, and the high count was of 12 at Old Dreibelbis Farm, Virginville 3/22 (DBr).

Birders reported 33 warbler species. The 16 locally breeding species on that list were seen at the usual places in expected numbers ranging from few to many. With few exceptions, the boreal and other nonbreeding warblers were mostly seen as single birds at widely scattered places, many of them missed even by active birders.

A male **Golden-winged Warbler** (photo on the previous page), now rare on migration, was seen 5/24, 25 at SGL 106 (BL, AP, JR, KG), where it was photographed with a male **Blue-winged Warbler** (MG). Birders have learned to be on the lookout for spring overshoot male **Prothonotary Warblers** along the Schuylkill R. in southern Berks. This year birds were reported at 3 places between Birdsboro and Douglassville 5/21-23 (LI, JE, JR). Despite its frequent appearances, the only breeding confirmation of Prothonotary Warbler was made at LO in 1957. The only reported **Mourning Warbler** was at SGL 106 on 5/20 (DBr). By mid-May, **Kentucky Warblers** were on territory at their two known breeding locations, SGL 106 and Sixpenny Cr., French Creek State Park. **Cerulean Warblers** (One



Kentucky Warbler. Photo by Brian Lineaweaver



Cerulean Warbler, Photo by Brian Lineaweaver

picture at left and another on Page 1) were on known or probable breeding territories on the KR. One was at Hamburg Reservoir 5/8 (KG), 2 at HMS 5/16, 21 (DBa), and one to 3 at Weiser State Forest, Port Clinton 5/18, 21 (AS, et al.). **Yellow-throated Warbler** is another fairly regular spring overshoot and potential breeder along the Schuylkill R. in southern Berks. This year a male sang regularly near Old Morlatton Village 4/16-28 (S&F, LI, m.obs.) and was last seen 5/14 (JSp). One to 3 were at Hay Cr., where breeding probably occurred in the 1970's, 5/3-9. Another sang at Union Meadows Park boat launch 5/13 (AM). A **Blue Grosbeak** back on territory near Hamburg 5/6 (KG) was the earliest this year. Singles or pairs were first reported at three other places 5/11-24.

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