



The Distelfink

Fall 2025 Newsletter of the Baird Ornithological Club

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Dan Brennan, Sheila Martin and Lynn Cronomiz representing the B.O.C. at the World Bird Day event at the PA Game Commission's Middle Creek WMA

Vice-Presidents' Join Message, Fall 2025, by Linda Ingram and Art Zdancewic

The BOC Board of Directors creatively solved the dilemma of having no one available for the President's role by wrangling Art Zdancewic and Linda Ingram to act as co-Vice-Presidents for one club year. Their joint message follows.

I (Art) spent a few quiet minutes on my deck one late July morning and noticed the first signs of bird migration. A flock of about 200 Common Grackles flew over. Most of them were young birds. At least five Eastern Wood-Pewees were foraging in my trees. One landed close and I could see that it was a fledged bird. Wood Thrushes were chipping and not singing. All were signs that it is soon time for the Baird Ornithological Club to start the 2025/2026 birding year.

With Linda and me as co-chairs, the BOC Board and its committees have been hard at work designing walks for the fall and spring, arranging meetings with interesting presenters, and organizing this issue of The Distelfink. In turn, we are seeking more involvement from club members to assist with club activities. The board has created standing committees for Outreach, Conservation, Communication, Meeting Programs and the Newsletter. Each committee is chaired by a board member seeking collaboration with BOC volunteers. Please read the descriptions of the committees elsewhere in this issue, decide where your talents and interests could best be applied, then get in touch!

Lynn Cronomiz is our new treasurer. She has taken over from Chuck Coleman and is doing a bang-up job. We would like to publicly thank Chuck for his years of work as treasurer.

Irene Taylor is our secretary. She has been recording our board meetings with precision. Other board members are working on their committee projects involving communications, requests for talks by local organizations, getting members' opinions to help the board move forward, and messaging our members.

We are looking forward to meeting everyone at our first meeting on September 12th. It will be fun to chat about recent sightings, summer travels and seeing friends.

Committee Reports

Club News – Newly Created Committees at Work

- BOC Board of Directors Initiates Outreach Committee

The first meeting of the new BOC Outreach Committee was attended by Dan Brennan, Lucy Cairns and Sue Wolfe. Our committee strives to bring together members who enjoy sharing their love of birds with others. Each year, we typically receive 10–12 requests from schools, libraries, community groups, and organizations of all ages, such as:

- 1) Guided bird walks
- 2) Presentations on bird-related subjects
- 3) 'Table' events such as Earth Day, Berks County Conservation District Celebrations, World Migratory Bird Day, etc.

Guides and speakers are needed, of course, but we also need volunteers to help develop presentations, act as 'seconds' for trip leaders, collect materials for table events, and more. So, if you are not comfortable taking

the lead at an event, consider volunteering in a supporting role. Participation is a great way to expand your knowledge of birds while getting to know other dedicated BOC members.

To have your name included as a potential volunteer, email Dan Brennan at dbrennan50@aol.com or call Dan at 484-336-0455. Please specify which types of requests you'd like to be notified about and/or what skills and experience you have that might be useful. In particular, if you would consider helping with programs for children, please say so.

We all know birds are in trouble, so please consider supporting your club to make the public aware of the amazing world of birds.

- Communication Committee – Working to Keep You Informed!

Lynn Cronomiz is the chairperson of the Communications committee. The BOC Communications Committee plays a vital role in ensuring timely and effective dissemination of field trip updates to all members. When field trip guides have information to share, they are asked to text it directly to **610-462-9912**. Once received, the information is promptly forwarded to Mike Slater for posting on the Baird Ornithological Club's website under the **Field Trips** section at <https://bairdornithological.club>. A notification is also sent via text to Hannah Salvatore, who then distributes a blast email to all members—**members are encouraged to check their spam folders to ensure they receive these updates**. Additionally, the committee posts relevant updates and events on the club's Facebook page at, <https://www.facebook.com/BairdOrnithologicalClub>, to keep the community informed and engaged.

- Meeting Program Committee

Members of the program committee are Liz Cates lizcates834@gmail.com, Sheila Martin sheilamartin544@gmail.com and Art Zdancewic art.zdancewic@gmail.com. We were tasked with scheduling presenters for each of the Friday meetings during the 2025/2026 Baird year. We've scheduled programs covering a wide range of topics, from land management and bird tracking to stress management. Finding and contacting interesting presenters for monthly BOC meetings is an important and time-consuming job. Do you have a suggestion for a program topic and speaker that you would like to hear? Contact any of us.

- Conservation Committee:

This committee, chaired by Dave Hemberger, will provide members with updates and calls to action regarding legislation or other environmental initiatives of importance to our birding community. Our voices and comments are critical as we attempt to influence those in local, state and federal government who make important policies and legislation in the protection of wildlife habitats and vulnerable species.

Dave.Hemberger@gmail.com

- Newsletter Committee

While not a new committee, the current team is Linda Ingram as coordinator, Rudy Keller as text editor, Lynn Cronomiz as copy editor, and Mike Slater, who puts it together in digital format, as producer. **The Distelfink** is both the news of the club and a historical record of club activity. It is the principal communication link between the club and its members. We would like to make it more interactive. The newsletter has a long history of publishing articles written by BOC members. Do you have a story about birds or birding, serious or on the light side, that could become a short article? Suggestions for content and contributions are always welcome and can be submitted to Linda, lindamingram29@gmail.com at any time.

- Field Trips Committee

Board member Russ Hoffman, russhoff@yahoo.com, continues in the role of field trip planner and scheduler, now with assistance from Rudy Keller and Jay Kline. Determining where and when to see the birds of Berks,

and occasionally beyond, is always a challenge and is now a team effort. If you have any thoughts on the schedule, suggestions for new places to visit, or are willing to help out, contact Russ.

BOC Financial Update – Fiscal Year 2024–2025

Lynn Cronomiz was elected Treasurer of the Baird Ornithological Club at the June 2025 members meeting. As

Treasurer, Lynn is committed to transparency and providing financial updates to the membership.

The club’s fiscal year runs from September 1, 2024, through August 31, 2025. At the time of printing, the financial records show a stable balance with thoughtful stewardship of club funds. The beginning balance in August 2024 was **\$8,790.88**, and the ending balance as of June 2025 is **\$8,676.25**.

Thank you for your continued support of the BOC’s mission and activities.

Baird Ornithological Club		
General Ledger		
Fiscal Year from 2024-09-01 to 2025-06-30		
date	name	amount
BUSINESS CHECKING ... August 31 2024 Balance		
9/3/2024	PayPal Transfer	23.79
9/3/2024	DEPOSIT- Dues	50
10/1/2024	PayPal Transfer	833.57
10/15/2024	CASHED CHECK # 2104- Robert Sprague	-150
10/16/2024	DEPOSIT- Dues	160
10/22/2024	CHECK # 2360- Dr Jen Vehlind	-150
11/1/2024	DEPOSIT	305
11/1/2024	PayPal Transfer	95.15
11/4/2024	CHECK # 2102- Sheila Printing	-118.91
11/13/2024	DEPOSIT	80
12/2/2024	PayPal Transfer	227.22
12/16/2024	CHECK # 2107- Robert Slater Web Site	-165.24
12/18/2024	DEPOSIT	175
1/2/2025	PayPal Transfer	169.93
1/14/2025	Deposit	20
1/30/2025	Check #2103- Joe Sebastiani	-75
2/3/2025	PayPal Transfer	47.09
2/13/2025	Check #2105-PPFF Friends Nolde	-200
2/18/2025	Deposit	15
2/26/2025	Check #2361-Dr David Yeany	-200
3/3/2025	PayPal Transfer	85.93
3/18/2025	Deposit	455
3/21/2025	Deposit	90
3/24/2025	Check #2111-Nature Orchard	-150
3/25/2025	Check #2112-Sheila exp	-93.78
4/1/2025	PayPal Transfer	413.61
5/9/2025	Deposit	270
6/2/2025	PayPal Transfer	52.43
Total for Uncategorized Expense		4870.19
Income		4755.56
Expense		-4870.19
Net Income		-114.63

Conservation Groups, Partnering Events Reports

BOC at World Migratory Bird Day

By Lynn Cronomiz

On May 10, 2025, several BOC members hosted an engaging information table at World Migratory Bird Day, held at the scenic Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area. Despite the windy weather, it was a beautiful day filled with enthusiasm and learning. BOC joined several other local birding organizations to celebrate and raise awareness about bird migration. Our table featured a popular “True or False” game that shared fascinating facts about migrating birds, drawing in curious visitors of all ages. Many guests mentioned hearing about the event on *Jack’s Backyard*, and were delighted to learn that Jack, the beloved radio host, was one of BOC’s earliest members. (Photo on page 1)

Meetings/Programs Fall 2025 - Spring 2026

Meetings are held at 7:30 pm on the second Friday of the month in McConnell Hall at Nolde Forest Environmental Education Center, except for the January and February meeting which are held via Zoom only. (Zoom meeting links will be emailed to members a few days before the meeting. Non-members are welcome and may request a link from hannah.salvatore@comcast.net)

Friday, September 12, 2025 (in person only) at Nolde Forest EEC

***Please note: Time is 7:00pm** This opening season of BOC Meetings begins with a social gathering. Pizza and beverages are provided. **“Pennsylvania Fire Ecology and History,”** Brant Portner, Environmental Education Specialist, Middle Creek WMA. Smokey the Bear taught us that all landscape fires are bad, but fire has shaped ecosystems for thousands of years and its recent suppression has had negative effects. Learn how modern land managers with the PA Game Commission use fire as a tool to enhance habitats.

Friday, October 10, 2025 (in person only) at Nolde Forest EEC

“Bird Rescue and Transport,” Rita Stima-Stief, avid birder and photographer and licensed rescuer of injured birds. Rita lives in Lebanon County. Join us as she shares tales and photos of her rescues, often harrowing, always rewarding.

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

“Traveling with Eastern Towhees: Tracking Migration Timing and Pathways of a Declining Songbird,” Michele A. Eshleman, Motus Avian Research Coordinator at Willistown Conservation Trust and Ph.D. candidate at the University of Delaware.

We will follow the movements of seven tagged towhees, including three from eastern PA, using the Motus Wildlife Tracking System. We will also discuss the role private landowners can play in helping local birds thrive.

Friday, December 12, 2025 (in person only) at Nolde Forest EEC

“Avian Conservation in an Urbanized Fragmented Landscape,” Dan Ardia, Ph.D., Professor of Biology at Franklin & Marshall College. Dan will lead a conversation about his research studying how birds and mammals respond to rapid environmental change in a man-made landscape.

Friday, January 9, 2026 (Zoom only)

“Why Tree Swallows Feather their Nests,” Lauri Green, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Biology, Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania – Bloomsburg. Dr. Green will examine why Tree Swallows line their nests with the feathers of other birds, what feathers they use, and the relationship of this habit to reproductive success.

Friday, February 13, 2026 (Zoom only)

“A Snowy Owl Research Update,” Jean-Francois Therrien, Senior Scientist and Graduate Study Director at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary. J-F last appeared before our bird club about ten years ago to detail findings on his Snowy Owl research. He presents his fascinating findings on Snowy Owl behaviors and updates our knowledge of these apex predators.

Friday, March 13, 2026 (in person only) at Nolde Forest EEC

“Ornithotherapy – The Power of Birding,” Holly Merker, professional birding guide, award winning author, podcaster and leading reviewer for PA eBird. We’ll explore ways in which our connection to birds and nature enhances our well being and overall health.

Friday, April 10, 2026 (in person only) at Nolde Forest EEC

“Maurice Broun vs. Earl Poole, the Prequel,” Bill Uhrich, Reading Eagle writer and photographer and BOC historian.

Bill last contrasted the styles of these two birding luminaries in 2024. This time he digs into the details of their earliest known associations. Come enjoy the dramatic retelling of the cordial yet competitive relationship between these two men.

May meeting details to be announced.

BOC Field Trips & Bird Walks - Fall 2025 – Spring 2026

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

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 4, 2025 (Thursday) - Schuylkill River Trail at Morlatton Village Trailhead - 5 PM

Start the fall birding season with a stroll along the Schuylkill River looking for Common Nighthawks and other migrants. Directions: **480 Old Philadelphia Pike, Douglasville, PA.** Take Rt 422 E past Douglassville to traffic light at Old River Rd. Turn right, go short distance to first right onto Old Philadelphia Pike. Parking is on left, just past the sewage treatment plant. Coordinator: Linda Ingram, 610-621-7473.

September 6, 2025 (Saturday) - Berks County Parks, Angora Fruit Farm - 8 AM

The relic orchard is a great place to see fall warblers and flycatchers, including Yellow-bellied and Olive-sided. Directions: Route 12 to Spring Valley Rd. exit. Turn right, go a short distance to McKnight's Gap Rd. on left. Follow this road uphill and down the other side to stop sign and make a right onto Angora Rd. In a short distance there is a park sign and entrance lane to the left. **Location: Angora Fruit Farm, Berks County Parks & Recreation, Angora Rd, Reading, PA 19606, GPS 40.3624, -75.8839.** Coordinator: Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053.

September 9, 2025 (Tuesday) - Berks County Parks, Grings Mill and Trails - 8 AM

Fall migrants, resident birds, Wood Ducks and other waterbirds are easily seen along the Tulpehocken Creek at this location. **Location: 2083 Tulpehocken Rd, Reading, PA 19610.** Directions: East on Broadcasting Rd in Wyomissing to dead end at Tulpehocken Rd. Turn right and go ½ mile to park entrance on left. Coordinator Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053.

September 13, 2025 (Tuesday) - Green Hills Preserve - 8 AM

Walk the trails of a diverse meadow/grassland habitat in this beautiful part of southern Berks County. See summer residents and their off-spring and early migrants before they leave for the winter. Directions: **553 Gunhart Rd., Mohnton, PA.** Take Rt. 10 south past Penske Complex to Rt. 568. Turn right and go a short distance to right on Gunhart Rd. The Preserve sign and parking will be on the right. Coordinator: Art Zdancewic 610-858-3315.

SEPTEMBER HAWKWATCHES AT 4 LOCATIONS

Broad-winged Hawk Week

September 16, 2025 (Tuesday) - Rt 183 Hawkwatch Site - 8 AM

Broad-winged Hawks, Ospreys, Bald Eagles, Falcons possible.

Parking is limited at this venue, so carpooling (recommended) will be available at 8 am at Sheidy Boat Launch, aka Blue Marsh North Boat Launch, located on Rt. 183 a short distance on left after passing Old Church Rd. GPS Location 40.4126, -76.0865. The hawkwatch site is located on top of the Kittatinny Ridge. If going on your own, take Rt. 183 north 3.1 miles past the intersection of I – 78 and Rt. 183. A left turn lane at the top of the ridge will allow you to access the very small and uneven parking area at the PA Game Commission gate. Watch for fast traffic. Bring a lawn chair and water. No restrooms.

Watch location is Appalachian Trailhead Rt 183. Coordinator: Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053.

September 17, 2025 (Wednesday) Blue Marsh Lake, State Hill Boat Launch Hawkwatch – 9 AM – 4 pm

A variety of migrating hawks can be seen here at this time of year, and many times the birds pass by at eye level, affording close looks. Show up anytime during the day. Bring a folding chair, food and water as desired. Directions: Take State Hill Rd. to dead end at Brownsville Rd. Left ½ mile to State Hill Boat Launch entrance on right. Park on right at top of hill. 585 Brownsville Rd., Sinking Spring, PA 19608.

Coordinator: Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053.

September 18, 2025 (Thursday) - Hawk Mountain Sanctuary - 9 AM

Join BOC birders at the Hawk Mt. Visitor Center for a hike to the north lookout at this iconic venue. Great time to see migrating Broad-winged Hawks. Note that this rocky trail requires walking a mile uphill. Hiking sticks are recommended. Bring water and any desired snacks. Trail fee charged for non-members of Hawk Mt. Sanctuary. Directions: 1700 Hawk Mountain Rd., Kempton, PA.

Coordinator: Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053; call to carpool.

September 20, 2025 (Saturday) - Mt. Penn Pagoda Hawkwatch - 8 AM - 2 PM

Enjoy the beautiful view of the city while scanning for migrating raptors.

Location: 98 Duryea Dr, Reading, PA 19602. Directions: Meet at the Pagoda on Mt. Penn. Take Walnut St. in Reading uphill to first right after 13th St. Follow winding road to top at the Pagoda.

Coordinator: Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053.

September 27, 2025 (Saturday) - Union Meadows East - 8 AM

An easy loop trail through varied habitats of old fields, brush, wetlands, and riparian woodland. This walk can produce surprises, especially among migrating sparrows and warblers. Meet at Union Meadows East parking area.

Location: 100 Campbell Ford Rd, Douglasville, PA. Directions: From Birdsboro, take Rt. 724 east 2 miles to park sign on left immediately past Fork and Ale Restaurant. Coordinator: Rudy Keller 484-336-4155.

October 1, 2025 (Wednesday) - Bombay Hook NWR - 9 AM

Meet at the refuge headquarters visitor center. This refuge is known for the multitude of migrating shorebirds in fall. When the tide is right, the shorebirds may fill the pools and edges of mudflats, affording great looks and photo ops. Herons and earlier migrating ducks may also be numerous.

Directions: 2591 Whitehall Neck Rd., Smyrna, DE.

Coordinator: Art Zdancewic 610-858-3315; check with Art for possible carpool options.

October 4, 2025 (Saturday) - Blue Marsh Lake Stilling Basin - 8 AM

Join BOC members on a walk through the woods and along the stream on a fall morning, hoping for migrants.

Location: 1280 Palisades Dr, Leesport, PA. Directions: Look for the Stilling Basin sign along Palisades Rd., drive in and park at the end of the road at the base of the dam.

Coordinator: Liz Cates 610-926-3206.

October 11, 2025 (Saturday) - Historic Dreibelbis Farm - 8 AM

This is our first scheduled fall birding trip to this site. We hope to see the resident Red-headed Woodpeckers and any fall migrants that may be present.

Location: 356 Hard Hill Rd, Hamburg, PA. Directions: Take Rt. 222 N to roundabout at Moselem Springs. Go left onto Rt. 662, then about a mile to a right onto Rt. 143. Travel 1.6 miles to the farm sign on left. Drive down the farm lane to the house. Coordinator: Dan Brennan 484-336-0455'

October 12, 2025 (Sunday) - John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove - 9 AM

We will bird the fields and woods and check the river for waterfowl. The Visitor Center is open and free on Sunday. A great place to learn about Audubon's history and birds of the mid-Atlantic today.

Location: 1201 Pawlings Rd., Audubon, PA. Coordinator: Linda Ingram 610-621-7374.

OCTOBER HAWKWATCHES AT 3 LOCATIONS

Accipiter and Astur Hawk Week

October 14, 2025 (Tuesday) - Rt 183 Hawkwatch Site – 8 AM

Sharp-shinned Hawk (genus *Accipiter*) and Cooper's Hawk (now in the genus *Astur*) should be at peak migration. Golden Eagle possible.

Directions: **Carpooling instructions and directions are the same as for the September 16 field trip to Rt. 183 described above.** Coordinator: Russ Hoffman 484-794 7053

October 15, 2025 (Wednesday) - Blue Marsh Lake, State Hill Boat Launch Hawkwatch - 9 AM

Besides Sharp-shinned Hawks and Cooper's Hawks, a variety of other migrating hawks can be seen here at this time of year, sometimes passing by at eye level for close-up looks. Bring a folding chair and snacks if desired.

Location: 585 Brownsville Rd., Sinking Spring, PA 19608. Directions: to dead end at Brownsville Rd. Make a left, go ½ mile to State Hill Boat Launch entrance on right. Park on the right at the top of the hill.

Coordinator: Russ Hoffman 484-794 7053

October 18, 2025 (Saturday) – Mt. Penn Pagoda Hawkwatch - 8 AM - 2 PM

Great views of migrating hawks and eagles from this skyline lookout. Show up any time during the scheduled period to check out what is being seen. Meet at the Pagoda on Mt. Penn.

Location: 98 Duryea Dr, Reading, PA 19602. Directions: In Reading, go north uphill on Walnut Street to first right after 13th St. Follow winding road to top at the Pagoda.

Coordinator: Russ Hoffman 484-794 7053

October 19, 2025 (Sunday) - Lake Ontelaunee - 12 Noon

We will be carpooling to the various birding areas around the lake hoping for waterfowl and other migrants.

Meeting Location: at the west end of the dam on Rt. 73 between Routes 61 and 222. (Lake Shore Dr, Shoemakersville, PA 19555. GPS: 40.447, -75.933. Coordinator: Rudy Keller 484-336-4155

October 21 2025 (Tuesday) - Schuylkill River Trail, Gibraltar End – 8 AM

This area is being developed for a boat launch site by Schuylkill River Greenways and named Reeser's Landing.

We will walk the trail upstream hoping to see fall migrants that utilize this riparian corridor for their

southbound journey. **Location: 1018 Gibraltar Rd, Birdsboro, PA 19508.** Directions: From traffic light in Gibraltar, proceed north across bridge to first left into parking area. Coordinator: Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053.

October 25, 2025 (Saturday) - Kernsville Dam and Recreation Area - 8 AM

This site includes a wetland, woodland, and river area which attract many different species of birds. It is also close to the migration corridor of the Kittatinny Ridge, so anything is possible.

Meeting Location: at the parking lot for the John Bartram Trail, Hamburg, PA 19526, 40.5624, -75.9947.

Directions: Take Rt. 61 north to traffic light for Cabela's. Turn right on Jetson Dr. then right again on Industrial Dr. Travel 1 mile to left on Kernsville Dam Rd. Parking is on the left.

Coordinator: Matt Wlaniewski 484-577-3530

October 28, 2025 (Tuesday) - French Creek State Park at Hopewell Lake - 8 AM

An easy walk along the southern edge of Hopewell Lake through the picnic area and the bordering woods. Late migrants, waterfowl, and early wintering birds are possible. Red-headed Woodpeckers may still be in this area.

Directions: From east end of Birdsboro go south on Rt. 345 and turn right on Park Rd., where you will see a Hopewell Lake sign. Drive 2 miles to the left turn into the parking area. **GPS Location: 40.1982, - 75.7906.**

Coordinator: Jay Kline 610-858-5130

December 14, 2025 (Sunday) – Reading Christmas Bird Count

Compiler: Lucy Cairns ljanetcairns@gmail.com

December 19, 2025 (Friday) – Elverson Christmas Bird County

Compiler: Jim Cook jim@elversonsupply.net

December 28, 2025 – Hamburg Christmas Bird Count

Compiler: Laurie Goodrich goodrich@hawkmountain.org

January 3, 2026 – Bernville Christmas Bird Count

Compiler: Mike Slater paplantings@gmail.com

January 1, 2026 (Thursday) - New Year's Day Birding Event - 8 AM

Join BOC members to kick off a new year of birding in Berks County.

Meet at the parking lot of Cacoosing Meadows Park (Reedy Rd. near Evans Hill Rd.), where this auto tour will start at E. J. Breneman Quarry. **Meeting Location: 1049 Reedy Road, Sinking Spring PA.** Directions: Take State Hill Rd. past Giant Market to Reedy Rd. Make a left and go 1 mile to the parking lot on right. Coordinators: Peter and Jane Wolfe 484-794-3703

January 17, 2026 (Saturday) – Blue Marsh Lake, Dry Brooks Day Use Area - Gull Event - 2 PM

Shiver by the lake as we survey and count the gulls on the beach. This is the prime time to see Iceland and Glaucous Gulls among multitudes of Ring-billed Gulls. Check the BOC website for information before going because the lake may be frozen and the gulls may be absent.

Location: Dry Brooks Day Use Area, 1420 Palisades Dr, Leesport, PA 1953. Directions: On Palisades Rd., look for the Dry Brooks Day Use Area sign and follow the entrance road to its end at the parking area. Coordinator: Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053

February 26, 2026 (Sunday) - E.J. Breneman Quarry - Winter Waterfowl - 12 Noon

This has become a well attended outing for members and non-members alike. Experienced BOC birders with spotting scopes will help you see and learn to identify the ducks and other waterfowl wintering in Berks County. **Meeting Location: 1049 Reedy Road, Sinking Spring PA.** Directions: Meet at the parking lot of Cacoosing Meadows Park on Reedy Rd. near Evans Hill Rd. Coordinator: Rudy Keller 484-336-4155

March 1, 2026 (Sunday) - Lake Ontelaunee – Waterfowl and Late Winter Birds - 12 Noon

We will carpool to various points around the lake and, weather permitting, take a walk to the more remote parts of this habitat. Migrating ducks may be numerous and we will take the time to help everyone identify them through scopes. **Meeting Location: at the west end of the dam on Rt. 73 between Routes 61 and 222. (Lake Shore Dr, Shoemakersville, PA 19555. GPS: 40.447, -75.933.** Directions: Meet at the Lake Ontelaunee dam breast parking lot on Rte. 73. Coordinator: Rudy Keller 484-336-4155

March 14, 2026 (Saturday) - Green Hills Preserve - 8 AM

Walk the grassland/meadow trails in search of late winter and early spring birds. Possibilities include N. Harrier, Purple Finch, Fox Sparrow and other sparrows.

Location: 553 Gunhart Rd., Mohnton, PA. Directions: Take Rt. 10 South past the Penske Complex to Rt. 568. Turn right and go 1 mile to a right on Gunhart Rd. Sign for preserve and parking on right. Coordinator: Art Zdancewic 610-858-3315

March 15, 2026 (Sunday) – Union Meadows East Woodcock Stakeout – 7 PM

Listen for and try to glimpse the crepuscular Am. Woodcock as it performs its courtship flights.

Directions: **100 Campbell Ford Rd., Douglassville, PA.** From Birdsboro, take Rt. 724 E two miles to park sign on left just past Fork and Ale Restaurant. Coordinator: Art Zdancewic 610-858-3315

March 21, 2026 (Saturday) - Berks Leisure Area (CAKE) Walk - 8 AM

Welcome spring with a walk along the Tulpehocken Creek to Grings Mill. Beautiful Wood Ducks are a highlight along with the TREAT at the end of the walk.

Location: Berks Leisure area at 1901 Tulpehocken Rd, Wyomissing, PA 19610. Directions: Take Broadcasting Rd. in Wyomissing east to dead end at Tulpehocken Rd. Turn right and go 1 ½ miles to the sign for Berks Leisure Area. Coordinator: Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053

March 24, 2026 (Tuesday) - Berks Nature - Angelica Park - 8 AM

Walk the trails of this new wetland where early spring migrants are possible. Location: The Nature Place parking lot: **Location: 575 St Bernardine St, Reading, PA 19607.** Directions: Take Rte. 10 south from Lancaster Ave. and turn right into the Alvernia University entrance. Park in the first lot on the right. Coordinator: Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053

March 28, 2026 (Saturday) - Schuylkill River Trail, Gibraltar End - 8 AM

Easily seen Bald Eagles have been nesting in this area, and a Great Blue Heron colony can be observed before the foliage appears. Meet at the newly created Reeser's Landing. **Location: 1018 Gibraltar Rd, Birdsboro, PA 19508.** Directions: From traffic light in Gibraltar, go north across bridge to first left. Parking on left. Coordinator: Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053

April 4, 2026 (Saturday) - Grings Mill - 8 AM

With good weather, we might see early Palm and Pine Warblers on this popular walk. Wood Ducks, Common Mergansers and resident birds of riparian habitat will be found. **Location: 2083 Tulpehocken Rd, Reading, PA 19610.** Directions: Take Broadcasting Rd. in Wyomissing east to dead end at Tulpehocken Rd. Go right ½ mile to parking on left. Coordinator: Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053

April 7, (Tuesday) - Kernsville Dam and Recreation Area – 8 AM

Sora, Virginia Rail and bitterns may be found along with other spring migrants. The trail winds through the marsh and enters a woodland along the Schuylkill River. **Meeting Location: The parking lot for the John Bartram Trail, Hamburg, PA 19526, 40.5624, -75.9947.** Directions: Take Rt. 61 north to traffic light for Cabela's in

Hamburg. Make a right on Jetson Dr. and another right on Industrial Rd. Go 1 mile to Kernsville Dam Rd. on left. Parking will be on the right. Coordinator: Matt Wlaniewski 484-577-3530

April 11, 2026 (Saturday) - State Game Lands 280 - 8 AM

Varied habitats including grassland/meadow, hedgerows, woodlots and waterways at the perimeter of Blue Marsh Lake should yield some interesting migrants and residents, including Osprey. **Meeting Location: Justa Road 40.37066, -76.06973.** Directions: Take State Hill R. to dead end at Brownsville Rd. Make a left and travel 4 miles to Justa Rd on right. Make right and go to dead end. Coordinator: Liz Cates 610-926-3206

April 18, 2026 (Saturday) - Union Meadows East - 8 AM

An easy walk on a flat gravel trail that circles through meadows, brush and riparian woods along the Schuylkill River. Great place to see early migrating warblers, thrushes, sparrows and many other songbirds. Rusty Blackbird has consistently been found here in late winter and spring. Walks here typically record high species counts. **Location: 100 Campbell Ford Rd, Douglasville, PA.** Directions: Take Rt. 724 east from Birdsboro 2 miles to park sign on left just past Fork and Ale Restaurant. Coordinator: Jay Kline 610-858-5130

April 21, 2026 (Tuesday) – Berks County Parks, Angora Fruit Farm - 8 AM

The abandoned orchard and bordering woods often yield close-up views and photos of warblers and other spring arrivals. **Location: Angora Fruit Farm, Berks County Parks & Recreation, Angora Rd, Reading, PA 19606, GPS 40.3624, -75.8839.** Directions: Take Rt. 12 east to Spring Valley Rd. exit. Turn right, go ½ mile and turn left on McKnight's Gap Rd. Follow the road uphill and down the other side to stop sign and turn right on Angora Rd. Go right one block to park sign and entrance lane on left. Coordinator Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053

April 28, 2026 (Tuesday) - Hay Creek Watershed - 8 AM

Along with spring warblers that may be encountered here, breeders like Louisiana Waterthrush, Worm-eating Warbler, Am. Redstart and Acadian Flycatcher are usually seen. Berks County's only known breeding colony of Bank Swallows is in the neighboring quarry, but the birds are difficult to see. **Location: Old 82 Parking Area: 2000 Hay Creek Rd, Birdsboro, PA.** Directions: From the intersection of Rts. 724 and 568 in Gibraltar, take Rt. 568 west about 1.5 miles. Make a left onto White Bear Rd. and go past 2 stop signs (4 miles) to the dead end at Hay Creek Rd. Turn left and follow Hay Creek RD to its end. Coordinator: Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053

May 2, 2026 (Saturday) - Nolde Forest EEC - 8 AM

This forest is a good place to see spring woodland birds, and as a bonus we may get a good look at a Barred Owl. This owl nests here and both adults and nestlings have been seen in recent years. This venue is hilly but paved in most of the areas that we walk. **Location: Nolde Forest Sawmill Parking Area, 3025 New Holland Rd, Reading, PA 19607.** Directions: From the intersection of Rts. 724 and 625 in Shillington, go south to the sign for the Sawmill Parking Area on the right. Coordinator: Linda Ingram 610-621-7473

May 5, 2026 (Tuesday) - Hamburg Reservoir - 8 AM

This venue requires the ability to walk uphill for about a mile on a gravel road at a leisurely pace. We will bird the woodland edge below and around the reservoir. It is possible to get good looks at warblers along the sunlit edge of the forest here in May. **Location: Pinnacle Access of the Appalachian Trail, 400 Reservoir Rd, Hamburg, PA 19526.** Directions: Take Rte. 61 north to the turnoff to downtown Hamburg. Proceed to State St. and make a right. Go 4 miles and make a left on Reservoir Rd. just past Edenburg. **The street sign is easy to miss.** Go straight ahead to the parking area. Coordinator: Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053

May 9, 2026 (Saturday) - Hopewell Big Woods Trail - 7 AM

Note the earlier than usual starting time for this downhill walk through grassland and edge habitats on a well-maintained trail. This is the easiest place in Berks County to see Yellow-breasted Chat. Prairie and Blue-winged Warblers breed here, and Grasshopper Sparrow and Blue Grosbeak, along with many other migrants and

breeders, are possible. Most birds can easily be seen, and this walk can produce some of the highest species counts of the year. **Location:** 165 Center Road, Douglassville, PA. Directions: Take Rt. 724 east 1.5 miles from Birdsboro and turn right on Center Rd. Coordinator: Jason Kline 610-858-5130

May 16, 2026 (Saturday) - Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site - 8 AM

We usually see breeding species like Ovenbird, Hooded Warbler, N. Parula and Am. Redstart, along with Wood Thrush, Veery and others. Red-headed Woodpeckers were here last year. **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. Coordinator: Sheila Martin 610-858-6005

May 30, 2026 (Saturday) - Historic Dreibelbis Farm - 8 AM

This last scheduled walk of the BOC birding year has become popular with our members due to the interesting history of the property and its good variety of nesting birds, including Red-headed Woodpeckers, Am. Kestrels, flycatchers, swallows, and bluebirds. **Location:** 356 Hard Hill Rd, Hamburg, PA. Directions: Take Rt. 222 north to the roundabout at Moselem Springs. Take 3rd exit from circle west on Rt. 662. Go about a mile and make a right on Rt. 143. Travel 1.6 miles and turn left at the farm sign into the lane. Coordinator: Dan Brennan 484-336-0455

Birding Magee Marsh – America’s Warbler Capital

By Liz Cates

Spring means warbler migration and what better place to find them than at Magee Marsh Wildlife Area. The Baird Club’s Linda Ingram, along with friend Mary Singer, organized the four-day excursion to northern Ohio in the first week of May. Lorna Bozeman and Liz Cates rounded out the foursome.



Liz Cates (author) with friends ready to look for warblers.

Photo by Linda Ingram

We drove to our lovely, rented home only a ten-minute drive from the main boardwalk, and were immediately greeted by a Red-headed Woodpecker perched above us in the yard. A good omen! After settling into our new digs we acclimated ourselves to the area and planned our days for maximum birding experience. Weather threatened us with rain each day we were there, but we all were dressed for it and it held off for the most part, rarely amounting to more than a drizzle here and there.

The “big week” at Magee Marsh is usually the second week of May. Our trip coincided with smaller crowds and early migrants. We were not disappointed! The bulk of our time was spent on the main boardwalk, a wooden structure that winds through the marshy bogs along Lake Erie. Crowd sizes were perfect—enough to share

sightings with others, but not stifling or uncomfortable.

The migrating birds arrived here tired and hungry. Many were eye-level or a tad higher, where we could get outstanding looks. Oblivious to us, they busied themselves feeding and struck made-for-photography poses along the boardwalk. Among the memorable sightings were Scarlet Tanager, Black-throated Green Warbler,

Prothonotary Warbler, a host of Yellow Warblers, Black-and-White Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler and many, many more.

Other areas we visited were the surrounding marshes and ponds, such as Metzger Marsh, Pickerel Creek Wildlife Area, and Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge. Bald Eagles were everywhere! Other notable species included Black-crowned Night-Heron, Snowy Egret, Dunlin, Willet and other wading/shore birds. We also found Am. White Pelican, Common Gallinule, Blue-winged Teal, Sandhill Crane and Trumpeter Swan.

We capped off the trip with a delicious dinner in nearby Oak Harbor. We said goodbye to Magee Marsh early the following morning for the seven-hour trip back home, our minds filled with fresh visions of all the wonderful creatures we saw.

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Past Field Trip Reports

FIRST DAY OF BIRDING, January 1, 2025 by Peter and Jane Wolfe

8 AM, Wednesday, January 1, 2025, Art Z, Dan B, Liz C, Hannah S, Irene T, Rudy K, Deanne J, Linda I, Jason K (with his camera) met Peter and Jane W. at E J Breneman Quarry. These eleven intrepid birders were eager to begin their lists for the New Year. The weather cooperated, about 47° F, clear, no fog, rain, or snow. Hidden among the many Canada Geese and Mallards was 1 Cackling Goose, small with a short bill. Also 1 female Canvasback, 5 American Coots, 2 Northern Pintail, 1 Lesser Scaup, Ring-necked Ducks, Redheads, and Ruddy Ducks revealed themselves. A Belted Kingfisher flew by, better heard than seen.

From Breneman's, we drove to Blue Marsh Lake. There was nothing at State Hill Boat Launch or the Stilling Basin. Our next stop was Dry Brooks Day Use Area where we saw the usual Ring-billed Gulls and a few Herring Gulls. A Bald Eagle and 3 Common Mergansers flew over. Eastern Bluebirds were dropping from the trees to grab food on the ground. Peter and Jane had filled the feeders at the Sensory Trail so the usual House Finches, Tufted Titmice, White-breasted Nuthatches, Carolina Chickadees, 1 Black-capped Chickadee, Downy Woodpeckers, and Red-bellied Woodpeckers were enjoying their seeds and suet.

Time for a quick break in the parking lot and there we had a surprise. Jason shared his homemade Butternut Squash bread with everyone. Delicious! Thank you Jason!

Our last stop was past Bright School Road at the end of Snyder School Road. We parked in a muddy lot and walked what used to be a macadam road. Disappointment reigned as we only saw a few Juncos. We turned around and headed back to our cars. Down by the creek, a hunter was walking with his dog. He must have pushed some birds up to us because suddenly we saw Golden-crowned Kinglets, Field Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows, Song Sparrows, and what has become the rare American Tree Sparrow. And so our New Year's Day birding adventure ended on a very happy note totaling 49 species.



E. J. Breneman Quarry - February 23, 2025, by Rudy Keller

The first mild day in two months brought out 16 birders to see wintering waterfowl at the best place in Berks County to get good looks at them. We saw 12 duck species, including such winter regulars as Redheads, N. Pintails, Ruddy Ducks and the Am. Coots that live among them. Snow Geese dominated the lake. A clamorous lift-off sent a spectacular wave of geese low over our group, but not one birder was pelted with goose pesto. Join us in 2026.

Waterfowl watching at Breneman's Quarry, Feb. 3, 2025. Photo by Linda Ingram

Green Hills Preserve - March 15, 2025, by Art Zdancewic

Early migrants were on the move on this foggy morning. We counted many robins, Red-winged Blackbirds and 38 Song Sparrows among the 28 bird species we listed. Everyone's highlight was seeing an overwintering imm. N. Harrier quartering the fields and resting in the grass, where it was nicely photographed by Russ Hoffman. Two of the 12 participants were new to our walks and I encouraged them to attend more BOC activities.

Woodcock Watch at Union Meadows Park - March 15, 2025, by Art Zdancewic

This rescheduled walk was attended by 13 people wanting to see and hear the courtship flights of American Woodcocks. Sunset was at 7:10 pm and the display started at 7:20 pm. The three males calling and doing their wing twittering flights were easy to hear but very difficult to see.

Nolde Forest EEC - May 3, 2025, by Rudy Keller

Most of the 39 bird species seen by our group of seven birders were newly arrived neotropical migrants. Nine were warbler species, including breeding Louisiana Waterthrushes. We watched a female Ruby-throated Hummingbird gather plant down to line her nest. As last year, the most memorable bird was one of the resident Barred Owls. The owl, well photographed by Jason Kline, flew to a high branch overhead carrying prey to feed to its nestlings in a nearby tree cavity.

SGL 106, Pine Swamp Rd. - May 4, 2025, Rudy Keller

Songs of 46 bird species filled the mountainside forest on this misty morning. Wood Thrushes and Ovenbirds carried the chorus, with grace notes from 13 other warbler species and three vireo species. We heard both cuckoos, notably a very vocal Black-billed Cuckoo, as well as a noisy, flashy pair of Red-headed Woodpeckers.

Despite the later starting time, this productive walk was again sparsely attended, attracting only three birders. Visibility may be an issue. When trees are fully leafed out, as they were this year, most birds are heard but not seen, a problem for birders who must see a bird to appreciate it.

Hamburg Reservoir - May 10, 2025, by Linda Ingram



On this clear morning following a rainy day, nine birders arrived at the parking lot to a chorus of song from many of the 50 bird species we found. Many hikers to the Pinnacle passed our group as we slowly birded the forest edge along the road below the reservoir. We saw or heard 13 warbler species. Everyone got long, clear looks at two male Cape May Warblers, the highlight among the warblers. We all appreciated seeing the many shades of blue on an Indigo Bunting singing from a low perch. A patch of pink ladyslippers near the reservoir brought out the cell phone cameras. BOC field trip planner Russ Hoffman, who dislikes uphill walks, made it up the hill and back down on this one, and even enjoyed it.

Hopewell Big Woods Trail - May 24, 2025, by Rudy Keller

Visibility is hardly ever an issue in this open habitat. In spite of strong west winds, our group of 12 people saw 59 bird species. Yellow-breasted Chat is everyone's target bird here, and this year we listed five, with good looks at two males on exposed song perches. As usual, birds of old fields and brushy edges abounded, such as five Prairie Warblers, as well as Common Yellowthroats, Indigo Buntings and Field Sparrows by the dozen. An Olive-sided Flycatcher sallying from a dead ash tree, definitively photographed in harsh light by Jason Kline, was the only one seen this spring by most of the participants.

Old Dreibelbis Farm - June 1, 2025, by Allan Chelius

There were approximately 10 BOC members who met at Dreibelbis farm. It was a wet and windy day so the distance we could go was limited. According to the members, among the 43 bird species heard or seen were Indigo Buntings, Red-headed Woodpecker, Yellow Warblers and Common Yellowthroats. We saw a Red-headed Woodpecker for a brief moment, but I did not get a picture. We got a quick look at a Green Heron. There were many Tree and Barn Swallows. I got photos of an Eastern Kingbird, a Great-crested Flycatcher and an Eastern Wood-Pewee. Great group of knowledgeable birdwatchers!

Berks County Birds – Winter 2024-25

**and
2025 by Rudy Keller**

Both Berks Bird reports are now available on [the B.O.C. website.](#)

“Rufous” vs. “RED!!!” A Short travelogue by Sheila Martin

“... then, don’t go to Thailand!” - one of my new birding-traveler friends proclaimed as I grumbled about the thorny dry impossible tangles and 12’-high leafy vine mats in Oaxaca, Chiapas and Tabasco provinces of Pacific-side southern Mexico, this past January.

Northern Cardinals, Scarlet Tanagers, Vermillion Flycatchers et al, never fail to elicit an appreciative smile from behind binoculars on birding trails locally, and from state to state & province to province across North

America. There simply is nothing like a red bird. But I had to go to a different latitude

(while in the same hemisphere) to experience so vast the color range, tint-&-hue nuances and eloquent, almost prayerful monikers of Mexico’s amazing offering of pinkish-to-rosy-to-brownish-to-rouge-to-rufous-to-red feather tones!



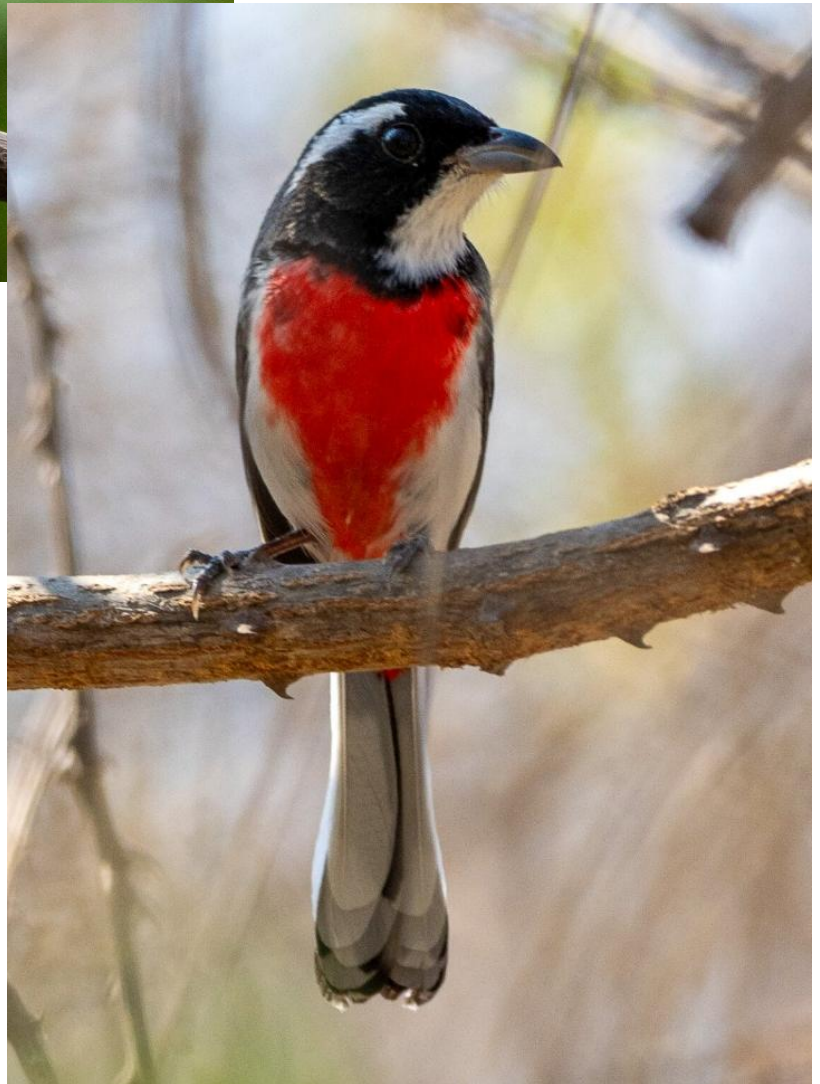
*Rufous-breasted Spinetail,
photo by Richard Thunen*

Consider this partial list of name descriptives I encountered on my Southern Mexico species list: Red-billed, Ruddy, Garnet-throated, Ruby-throated, Cinnamon, Rufous-tailed, Russet-naped, Roseate, Reddish, Rufous-breasted, Rose-throated, Red-lored, Rufous-browed,

Red-breasted Chat, Photo by Richard Thunen

Red-eyed, Ruby-crowned, Rufous-backed, Red-legged, Rufous-collared, Cinnamon-tailed, Chestnut-capped, Rufous-capped, Red-winged, Cinnamon-belted, Pink-headed, Red-breasted, Orange-breasted, and not-so-plain, plain-old-in-name Red Warbler!

At one end of the tone-&-tint spectrum was the poster child of the trip, Pink-headed Warbler. And the hits kept coming – where, at a 15-minute gas station stop/comfort break/see-what-we-can-





Pink-headed Warbler, Photo by Adam Timpf

see sortie toward a copse of trees beyond the parking lot, we ticked off Orange-breasted Bunting – and, be still my heart! – Red-breasted Chat - in the space of five minutes! The Chat – in its vibrant, vivid, indescribably bright, there-are-no-words-the-astounding-hue breast, illustrated the very DEFINITION SPLIT in nature between “Rufous” ... and “RED!!!”

And then there is Crimson (anything): not on this trip’s Species List. Duking it out on an E-bird search as a strong contender equal to Red-breasted Chat for World’s Brightest Avian Red, Crimson Sunbird popped up.

I guess I gotta go to Thailand ...



Orange-breasted Bunting, Photo by Adam Timpf



Crimson Sunbird, photo from the EagleEyeTours website.

Baird Ornithological Club, Current Officers and directors

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BOC Membership and Renewal

Payment is for **September BOC 2025 – August 2026**

- **Regular Membership Dues \$15/ year** /per person
- **Sustaining Membership Dues \$25 or more/ year** / per person

Now we have two ways to join or renew your B.O.C. membership!

- We will still happily take a check and the completed membership form (below) or
- **you can do it online though our website** at <https://bairdornithological.club/join-or-pay-dues-online> in two easy steps!

1) Enter the appropriate amount

and click either "Donate with PayPal" or "Donate with Debit or Credit Card".

2) Fill out the online information form and submit it. *By joining or renewing online you give your permission for BOC to contact you by email for club related announcements and newsletters.*

If paying by mail, please print this form and mail it to the address below.

Name(s):

Address:

Email address: _____

Phone # : _____

Note: An email address is required if you want to receive electronic communications and the link to receive the digital copy of The Distelfink from BOC and links for when the club's meetings are held via Zoom in the winter. By supplying my email address, I give my permission for BOC to contact me by email for club related announcements and newsletters.

[] I do not have access to or can't read an electronic version of the newsletter. Please send me a quick-printed version by USPS.

Send this form with payment to the BOC Treasurer:

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Morgantown PA 19543