

Checklist of Birds Recorded in Erie County, Pennsylvania, Including *Presque Isle State Park*

Compiled by
Gerald M. McWilliams
2014



Bird Watching in Erie County, PA: An Historical Perspective

This, the latest edition of the Erie County, PA, bird checklist, is dedicated to Jean Stull Cunningham, who started formal bird record-keeping for Erie County and compiled the county's first-ever checklist. Jean founded the *Presque Isle Nature Club* in 1956 (now the *Presque Isle Audubon Society*), and co-authored



Jean Stull Cunningham 1929-2011

Sam Stull © 2008

for, and dedication to, the natural world.

The ornithological history of Erie County takes us back to B. H. Warren who mentions Erie County in his "Report on the Birds of Pennsylvania" in 1890, when Piping Plovers nested regularly along the lake shore. Few birders existed then, and bird re-

records came from visiting ornithologists and hunters — gunners, as they were called. W. E. Clyde Todd made periodic visits to Erie County and published his monumental

Continued on next page



Jerry McWilliams conducting a waterfowl survey at *Presque Isle State Park*

Roger Dom © 2013

work, "The Birds of Western Pennsylvania" in 1940. From the 1940s until the mid-1950s, little bird activity was documented, but then birding, bird listing, and bird record-keeping really took off. Much has changed in what we know about birds since the 1950s. Canada Geese were still exciting to see and Double-crested Cormorants were considered rare well into the 1980s. Now several thousand might be seen in a single day. Bald Eagles nested only on Presque Isle, and only into the 1950s. In 2013, at least ten active eagle nests were known in the county. We've lost some breeding birds like Black Tern, which nested regularly on Presque Isle, and no active nests have been reported anywhere in Pennsylvania in the last few years. Recent waterfowl surveys along Lake Erie have changed the status of some species like Common and Red-throated Loon and all three scoter species, from rare and often irregular then, to common and regular now. Red-bellied Woodpeckers, once considered rare and irregular, are now permanent, common

residents. Evening Grosbeaks, which in the 1970s and 1980s were abundant in winter, now appear only once every few years. As the climate warms, Neotropical migrants arrive earlier and depart later, correlating with the availability of insects. This has been noted dramatically over the last decade. Breeding passerines, which typically did not arrive until early May, are now arriving in late April, and are heading south later in the fall.

The work of updating this checklist every few years is substantial, but necessary in order to keep up with ornithological changes. Contributors to this checklist, both past and present, are to be commended for making it one of the most informative and detailed of local checklists.

Jerry McWilliams

Front Cover: Checklist compiler, Jerry McWilliams, at sunrise, looking at birds through his spotting scope while on the beach near Gull Point within Presque Isle State Park. Photo taken by James R. Hill, III, in 1980.

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Compiled in 2014 by
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Key to the Seasonal Abundance and Frequency Charts

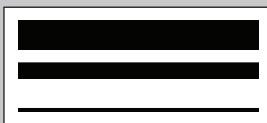
1. Abundance:

The numerical ranges given below are guides to average seasonal abundance, and mean that the species occurs in such numbers that a competent observer at the appropriate time(s) and place(s) might see or hear approximately the given number of individuals in a single day of birding.

Common to Abundant - 26 or more

Fairly Common - 6 to 25

Uncommon to Rare - Less than 6 per day



2. Frequency:

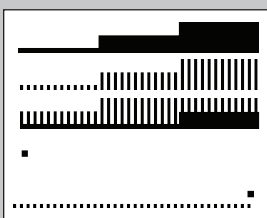
Regular - Recorded nearly every year (*solid line*)

Irregular - 2 or more years absence between sightings (*dashes*)

Variable - May vary widely from year to year (*solid line and dashes*)

Single observation of one or more birds indicating a duration of stay of *less than 7 days* (*elevated, single dash*)

Single observation of one or more birds indicating a duration of stay of *at least 7 days* and departure date (*string of lower dashes followed by an upper dash*)



3. Breeding Status:

No asterisk after a species' name indicates a non-breeding species.

* **A single asterisk** after a species' name indicates regular, or nearly regular, breeding.

** **A double asterisk** after a species' name indicates irregular breeding at intervals of 2 or more years.

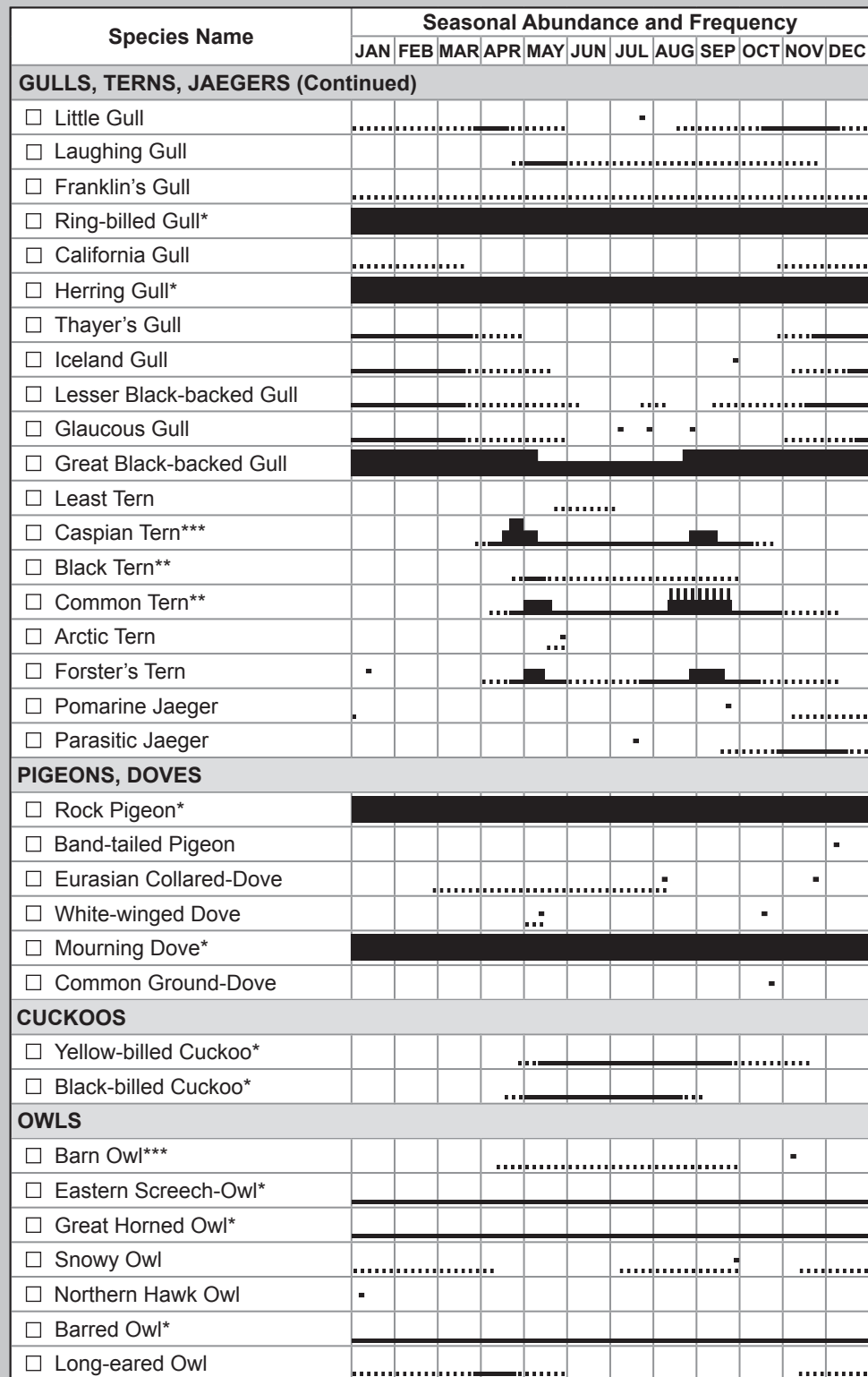
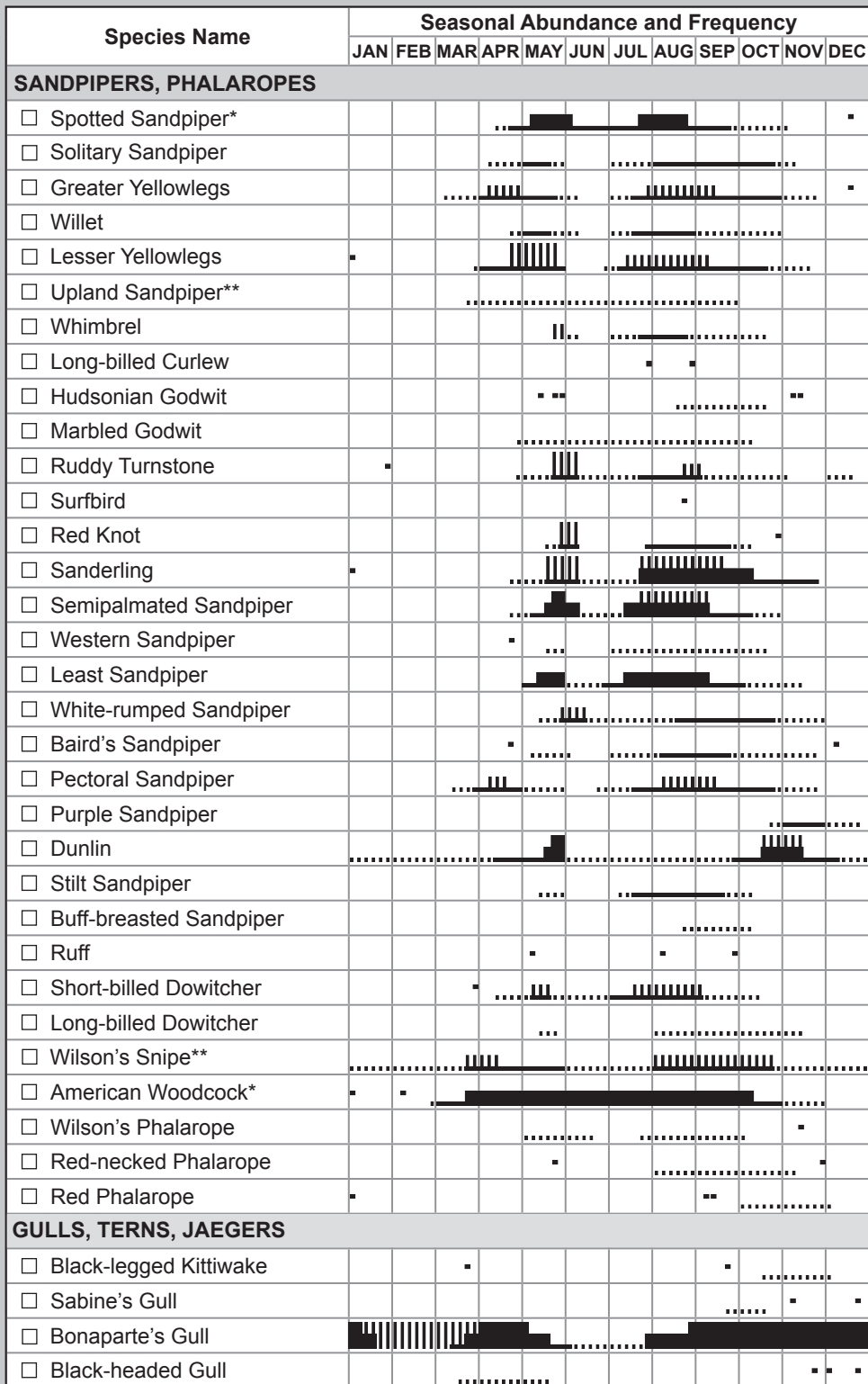
*** **A triple asterisk** after a species' name indicates an extant species no longer breeding in Erie County, PA.

4. **Species' names and groupings** are listed in taxonomic order following [The Clements Checklist of Birds of the World, 6th Edition](#), published by the *Cornell University Press* in 2007, and includes the annual, online, updates through 2012.

Species Name	Seasonal Abundance and Frequency											
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
GEESE, SWANS, DUCKS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Greater White-fronted Goose												
<input type="checkbox"/> Snow Goose												
<input type="checkbox"/> Ross's Goose												
<input type="checkbox"/> Brant												
<input type="checkbox"/> Cackling Goose												
<input type="checkbox"/> Canada Goose*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Mute Swan*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Tundra Swan												
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Duck*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Gadwall												
<input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Wigeon												
<input type="checkbox"/> American Wigeon												
<input type="checkbox"/> American Black Duck**												
<input type="checkbox"/> Mallard*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue-winged Teal**												
<input type="checkbox"/> Cinnamon Teal												
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Shoveler												
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Pintail												
<input type="checkbox"/> Green-winged Teal**												
<input type="checkbox"/> Canvasback												
<input type="checkbox"/> Redhead												
<input type="checkbox"/> Ring-necked Duck												
<input type="checkbox"/> Greater Scaup												
<input type="checkbox"/> Lesser Scaup												
<input type="checkbox"/> King Eider												
<input type="checkbox"/> Harlequin Duck												
<input type="checkbox"/> Surf Scoter												
<input type="checkbox"/> White-winged Scoter												
<input type="checkbox"/> Black Scoter												
<input type="checkbox"/> Long-tailed Duck												
<input type="checkbox"/> Bufflehead												
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Goldeneye												
<input type="checkbox"/> Barrow's Goldeneye												
<input type="checkbox"/> Hooded Merganser*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Merganser*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-breasted Merganser												
<input type="checkbox"/> Ruddy Duck												

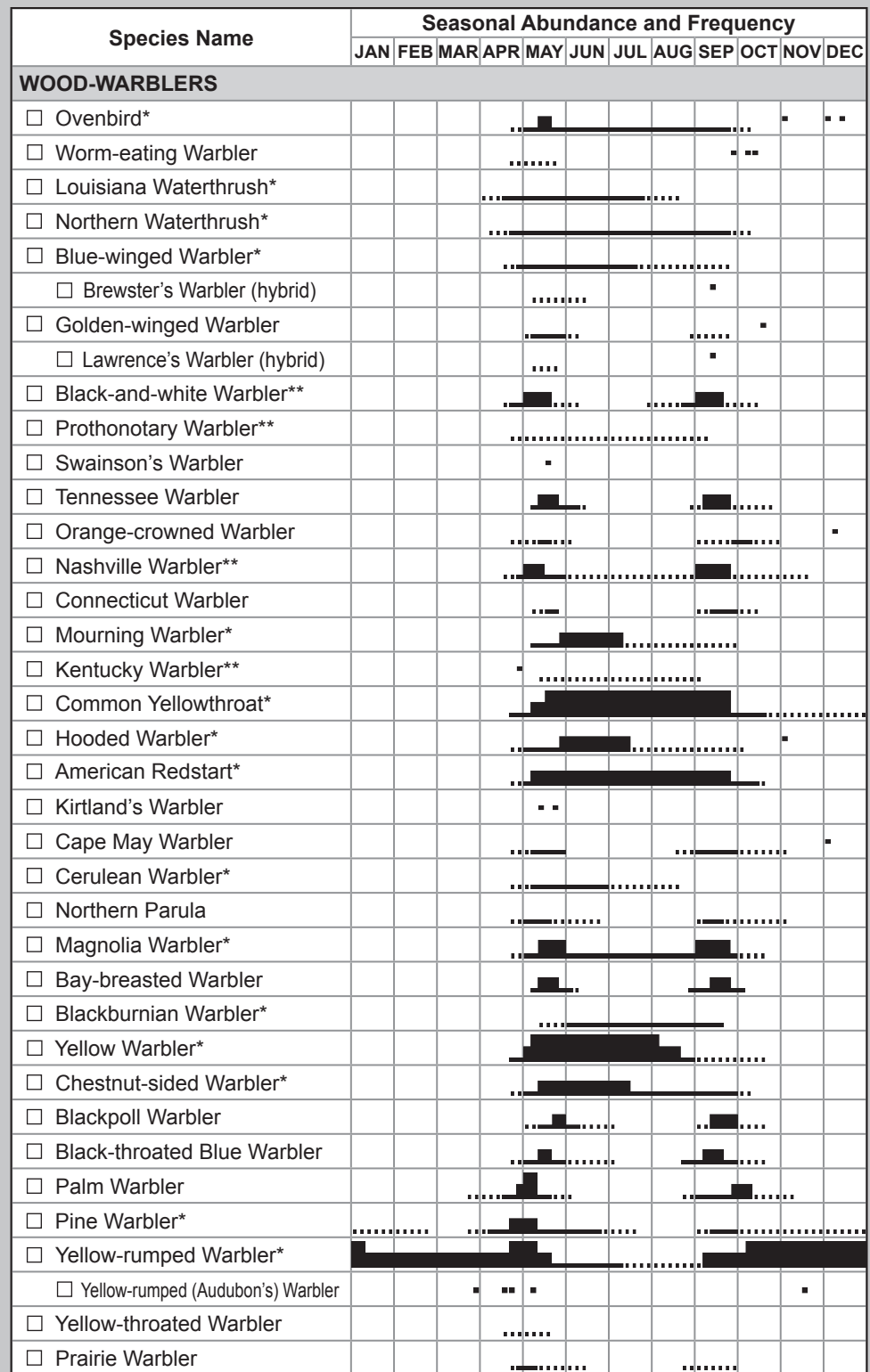
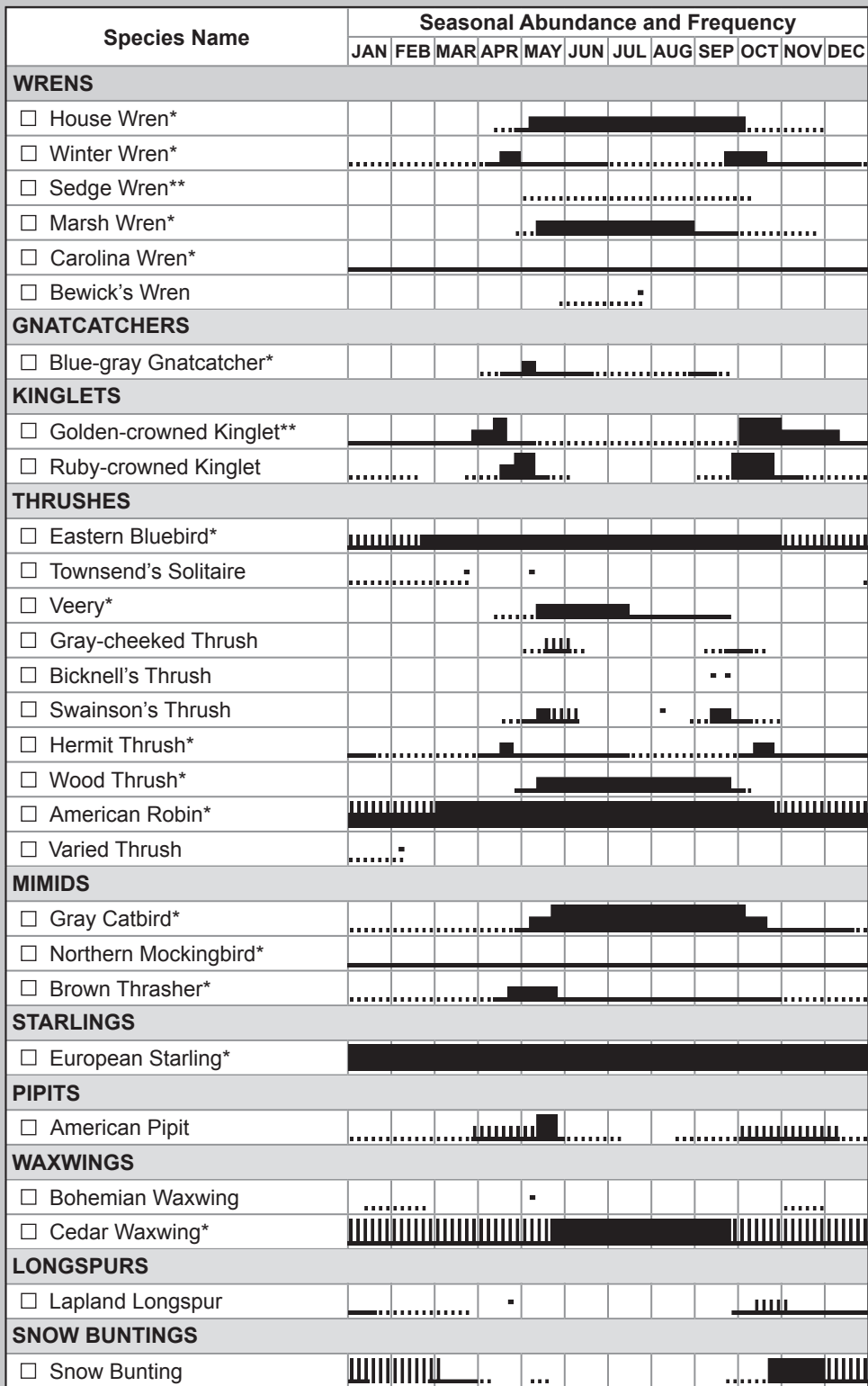
Species Name	Seasonal Abundance and Frequency											
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
PHEASANTS, GROUSE, TURKEYS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Ring-necked Pheasant*	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Ruffed Grouse*	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Wild Turkey*	[Abundance bars]											
LOONS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-throated Loon	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Pacific Loon	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Loon	[Abundance bars]											
GREBES												
<input type="checkbox"/> Pied-billed Grebe**	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Horned Grebe	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-necked Grebe	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Eared Grebe	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Western Grebe	[Abundance bars]											
STORKS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Stork	[Abundance bars]											
GANNETS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Gannet	[Abundance bars]											
CORMORANTS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Double-crested Cormorant	[Abundance bars]											
PELICANS												
<input type="checkbox"/> American White Pelican	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown Pelican	[Abundance bars]											
BITTERNS, HERONS, EGRETS, NIGHT-HERONS												
<input type="checkbox"/> American Bittern**	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Least Bittern*	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Blue Heron*	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Egret	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Snowy Egret	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Little Blue Heron	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Tricolored Heron	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Reddish Egret	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Cattle Egret	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Green Heron*	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-crowned Night-Heron	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	[Abundance bars]											
IBISES												
<input type="checkbox"/> Glossy Ibis	[Abundance bars]											

Species Name	Seasonal Abundance and Frequency											
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
SPOONBILLS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Roseate Spoonbill	[Abundance bars]											
AMERICAN VULTURES												
<input type="checkbox"/> Black Vulture	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Turkey Vulture*	[Abundance bars]											
OSPREY, KITES, EAGLES, HAWKS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Osprey*	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Swallow-tailed Kite	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Golden Eagle	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Mississippi Kite	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Harrier**	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Sharp-shinned Hawk*	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooper's Hawk*	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Goshawk	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Bald Eagle*	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-shouldered Hawk*	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Broad-winged Hawk*	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Swainson's Hawk	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-tailed Hawk*	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Rough-legged Hawk	[Abundance bars]											
RAILS, GALLINULES, COOTS, CRANES												
<input type="checkbox"/> King Rail	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Virginia Rail*	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Sora*	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Purple Gallinule	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Gallinule*	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> American Coot**	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Sandhill Crane	[Abundance bars]											
PLOVERS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-bellied Plover	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> American Golden-Plover	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Snowy Plover	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Wilson's Plover	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Semipalmated Plover	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Piping Plover***	[Abundance bars]											
<input type="checkbox"/> Killdeer*	[Abundance bars]											
AVOCETS												
<input type="checkbox"/> American Avocet	[Abundance bars]											



Species Name	Seasonal Abundance and Frequency											
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
OWLS (Continued)												
<input type="checkbox"/> Short-eared Owl												
<input type="checkbox"/> Boreal Owl												
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Saw-whet Owl**												
NIGHTJARS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Nighthawk*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Chuck-wills-widow												
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Whip-poor-will*												
SWIFTS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Chimney Swift*												
HUMMINGBIRDS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Ruby-throated Hummingbird*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Rufous Hummingbird												
KINGFISHERS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Belted Kingfisher*												
WOODPECKERS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-headed Woodpecker*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-bellied Woodpecker*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-bellied Sapsucker*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Downy Woodpecker*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Hairy Woodpecker*												
<input type="checkbox"/> American Three-toed Woodpecker												
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Flicker*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Pileated Woodpecker*												
FALCONS												
<input type="checkbox"/> American Kestrel*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Merlin*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Gyrfalcon												
<input type="checkbox"/> Peregrine Falcon*												
FLYCATCHERS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Olive-sided Flycatcher												
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Wood-Pewee*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-bellied Flycatcher												
<input type="checkbox"/> Acadian Flycatcher*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Alder Flycatcher*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Willow Flycatcher*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Least Flycatcher*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Phoebe*												

Species Name	Seasonal Abundance and Frequency											
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
FLYCATCHERS (Continued)												
<input type="checkbox"/> Say's Phoebe												
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Crested Flycatcher*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Western Kingbird												
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Kingbird*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Scissor-tailed Flycatcher												
SHRIKES												
<input type="checkbox"/> Loggerhead Shrike***												
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Shrike												
VIREOS												
<input type="checkbox"/> White-eyed Vireo												
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-throated Vireo*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue-headed Vireo*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Warbling Vireo*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Philadelphia Vireo												
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-eyed Vireo*												
JAYS, CROWS, RAVENS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue Jay*												
<input type="checkbox"/> American Crow*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Raven												
LARKS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Horned Lark*												
SWALLOWS, MARTINS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Rough-winged Swallow*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Purple Martin*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Tree Swallow*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Bank Swallow*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Barn Swallow*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Cliff Swallow*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Cave Swallow												
CHICKADEES, TITMICE												
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-capped Chickadee*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Boreal Chickadee												
<input type="checkbox"/> Tufted Titmouse*												
NUTHATCHES, CREEPERS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-breasted Nuthatch*												
<input type="checkbox"/> White-breasted Nuthatch*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown Creeper*												



Species Name	Seasonal Abundance and Frequency											
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
WOOD-WARBLERS (Continued)												
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-throated Gray Warbler												•
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-throated Green Warbler*				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Canada Warbler*				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Wilson's Warbler				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-breasted Chat				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
AMERICAN SPARROWS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Spotted Towhee												■
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Towhee*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> American Tree Sparrow	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Chipping Sparrow*				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Clay-colored Sparrow												■
<input type="checkbox"/> Field Sparrow*				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Vesper Sparrow*				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Lark Sparrow												■
<input type="checkbox"/> Lark Bunting												■
<input type="checkbox"/> Savannah Sparrow*				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Grasshopper Sparrow*												■
<input type="checkbox"/> Henslow's Sparrow**												■
<input type="checkbox"/> Le Conte's Sparrow												■
<input type="checkbox"/> Nelson's Sparrow												■
<input type="checkbox"/> Fox Sparrow				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Song Sparrow*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Lincoln's Sparrow	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Swamp Sparrow*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> White-throated Sparrow				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Harris's Sparrow												■
<input type="checkbox"/> White-crowned Sparrow												■
<input type="checkbox"/> Dark-eyed Junco*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
TANAGERS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Summer Tanager												■
<input type="checkbox"/> Scarlet Tanager*												■
<input type="checkbox"/> Western Tanager												■
CARDINALIDS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Cardinal*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Rose-breasted Grosbeak*												■
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue Grosbeak												■
<input type="checkbox"/> Indigo Bunting*												■

Species Name	Seasonal Abundance and Frequency											
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
CARDINALIDS (Continued)												
<input type="checkbox"/> Painted Bunting												■
<input type="checkbox"/> Dickcissel												■
BOBOLINKS, BLACKBIRDS, ORIOLES												
<input type="checkbox"/> Bobolink*												■
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-winged Blackbird*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Meadowlark*												■
<input type="checkbox"/> Western Meadowlark												■
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-headed Blackbird	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Rusty Blackbird												■
<input type="checkbox"/> Brewer's Blackbird												■
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Grackle*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown-headed Cowbird*												■
<input type="checkbox"/> Orchard Oriole*												■
<input type="checkbox"/> Baltimore Oriole*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
FINCHES												
<input type="checkbox"/> Pine Grosbeak												■
<input type="checkbox"/> Purple Finch*												■
<input type="checkbox"/> House Finch*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Red Crossbill	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> White-winged Crossbill	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Redpoll	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Hoary Redpoll	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Pine Siskin**	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> American Goldfinch*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Evening Grosbeak												■
OLD WORLD SPARROWS												
<input type="checkbox"/> House Sparrow*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
WRITE-INS												
<input type="checkbox"/>												
<input type="checkbox"/>												

The Following Species are Known to Have Occurred in Erie County, PA:

- Trumpeter Swan* (Recently introduced into eastern North America.) Status currently undetermined.
Northern Bobwhite (All sightings are believed to have been of escapees.)
Band-rumped Storm-Petrel (Remains found along shore of Lake Erie on 2/24/1998, origin unknown.)
Yellow Rail 1893-1896, 1900-1902, 1905
Eskimo Curlew (Probably extinct.) 1889
Thick-billed Murre 1896, 1899, 1900
Passenger Pigeon (Extinct.) Reported in county up until 1890.
Black-billed Magpie (Sighting is believed to have been of an escapee.) 1955