

The Peregrine

Three Rivers Birding Club Newsletter

<https://www.3rbc.org>

Vol. 23, No. 2 March/April 2024

Our Club's New President Will Dazzle Us with Photos and Stories of Costa Rica's Birdlife at Our April 3 Meeting!

At our April 3, 2024 meeting our club's new president, Mike Fialkovich, will show us why Costa Rica is so fabulous. Mike traveled to this birder's paradise in January 2023, and he will share with us the wonderful birds he saw there. If you have ever birded Costa Rica, you know what a fabulous birding destination it is, and if you have never been there, you will want to book a trip for yourself after seeing Mike's program! This meeting will again be a *hybrid* meeting, with both a live presentation at Beechwood Farms Nature Center and also an online Zoom meeting.

Mike's participation in 3RBC, the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology (PSO), and the birding world in general is very impressive. He has played a major role in every 3RBC meeting since its beginning. He reviews bird sightings made since the previous meeting and writes about this in *The Peregrine*, and he leads field trips for our club. His service to the birding community is appreciated far and wide.

In fact, the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology (PSO) recently announced that Mike is the 2024 recipient of the prestigious **Earl Poole Award**, presented annually to a person or persons who have made significant contributions to Pennsylvania's ornithology. Mike will receive the award at the upcoming PSO meeting in Washington County (<https://pabirds.org/2024-overview/>).

Mike is a past president of the PSO, and he has served on the state's Ornithological Records Committee (PORC). He also is one of the four seasonal editors of PSO's scientific publication, *Pennsylvania Birds*, as well as the compiler of bird sightings for the publication for Allegheny and Fayette counties. Mike served as a Regional Coordinator for the 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas, and currently is co-coordinator for Allegheny County for the 3rd Pennsylvania Bird Atlas, which began this year. Mike also received the W.E. Clyde Todd Award from the Audubon Society of Western PA in 2011.

Mike is the eBird reviewer for Allegheny, Fayette and Westmoreland counties. But, it is not only birds that Mike knows well. Mike is an all-around naturalist who incorporates his wider knowledge into all of his birding field trips. He was a block owner during the Pennsylvania Herpetological Atlas Project conducted in 2000-2001.

Our club is indeed fortunate to have Mike as an active member, and now as its new President!

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This will be a *hybrid meeting* starting at 6:30 PM ET in-person at Beechwood Farms auditorium and the Zoom meeting will begin at 7:00 PM. The business meeting will begin at 7:30 PM, and Mike's presentation will start around 8:00 PM. Details on how to join the event, including Zoom passcodes and other instructions, will be supplied to members before the meeting.



OUR SPEAKER AND NEW 3RBC PRESIDENT, MIKE FIALKOVICH, NEXT TO A SCARLET MACAW SCULPTURE IN COSTA RICA

Giant Step Forward for 3RBC!

By Frank Moone

I am excited to announce that the Three Rivers Birding Club (3RBC) is now officially registered as a Pennsylvania non-profit corporation and recognized as a 501(c)(3) entity by the IRS—a move that ensures our longevity and allows for greater member involvement.

Founded 23 years ago, 3RBC's original purpose was simply to provide a haven for area bird enthusiasts—a place for them to socialize, share outings and other experiences, and gather together to hear authoritative presentations from experts. Now, with more than 300 memberships and 400 individuals gathered under the umbrella of our organization, this move to formalize our operations will help us to accommodate the growing scope of the club and its activities.

What does this mean for 3RBC members? First, a nine-member Board of Directors will now govern the club, with club officers drawn from the Board. 3RBC members will elect the Board, with elections taking place to fill vacancies at our October meetings. Additionally,

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See *The Peregrine* in beautiful color at [3rbc.org](https://www.3rbc.org)

President's Message

Looking Back, Looking Forward

By Mike Fialkovich

When our club was founded in July 2001, I did not have any thoughts about ever becoming its president. I can remember the first meeting organized by Jack Solomon to determine if there was interest in a birding club in Pittsburgh, and with an attendance of approximately 80 people, it was obvious that there was.

Jack asked me to show some slides of birds at this meeting. I had a program called my favorite bird photos and using slides and a slide projector, I showed a collection of my bird photographs. Slides were placed in a tray in those days and the only way to know the order in a presentation was to have a list on paper to follow. For this program, I dropped slides into the tray at random so didn't know the order. That required me to remember where the photos were taken and other details. I put myself on the spot, but that made it fun for me. We have come a long way as digital photography and computer programs completely changed the way presentations are given.

Jack then asked me to be the Bird Reporting Officer for the club, and I will continue to write the bird reports for the newsletter and report bird sightings at our meetings as I have since the club's inception. I learned a lot over the years from the members of the 3RBC Steering Committees about how to organize and run club activities, something with which I had little-to-no experience. All the committee members and presidents over the years paved the way for me to take on this position. I hope I can do at least as well as they have.

I thank all the past presidents—Jack Solomon, Jim Valimont, Bob VanNewkirk and Sheree Daugherty—for all the work they have done to keep the club moving forward. I thank Adrian Fenton for volunteering to replace me as the club's Vice President. I've known Adrian for a few years now and look forward to working with him. Our Steering Committee has and continues to offer unending support for the club.

The club faced some challenges over the years, particularly with meeting locations, which continue to this day. We began at the Frick Park Nature Center and after a few years meeting there, it tragically caught fire. We were immediately faced with searching for another place to meet. Frick offered free parking, easy access and free use of the building, features that are not available at most locations. We then moved to the Garden Center until the center was set for major renovations, quickly followed by Covid restrictions that halted in-person meetings. Once in-person meetings resumed, we were very fortunate to be offered to meet at Beechwood until the Garden Center is renovated.

Looking back we have a great history of excellent speakers, a variety of field trips, a great newsletter and a growing membership. I'm also pleased we added new outings leaders in recent years as well as new outing locations. Finally (and importantly), as was announced recently, we are officially a non-profit organization thanks in large part to the efforts of Frank Moone. Thank you, Frank!

Onward.

Mike Fialkovich

Correction

In the January/February 2024 issue of The Peregrine, the photo of the Mallard on page 6 should have been credited to Jeffrey G. Boyd.

The Peregrine

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124th Pittsburgh Christmas Bird Count Summary

By Brian Shema, Audubon Society of Western PA

Two hundred and fifteen observers participated in the Pittsburgh Christmas Bird Count on December 31, 2023. The weather for count day was mild and rainy. This has become the norm for this count, it seems. The temperature ranged from 36 to 40 degrees at the count's geographic center in Shaler Township. Water was unfrozen on all lakes, rivers and streams. As in previous years, it was noted that birds were seemingly capable of finding plenty of natural food sources because of the mild weather; therefore, feeder count numbers were lower than expected. Despite the rain, we tallied 76 species, three more than our 10-year average.

In all participants counted 39,946 birds, which, interestingly, is within about 50 birds of last year's individual total. For the most part, birds' totals were average, but a few species were found in high numbers – in fact, their highest in the history of the count. These included Red-winged Blackbird (81) and Killdeer (21), both species with traditional winter ranges just slightly south and/or east of Pittsburgh. One would assume that these are in response to mild winter weather. Golden-crowned Kinglet (110) was also found in its highest

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Pittsburgh CBC

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abundance. The number of Field Sparrows (17) tied its previous high count, as did Common Raven (9), Hairy Woodpecker (93) and Northern Flicker (85). Finally, a Red-headed Woodpecker was found for only the sixth time on count day.

Audubon Society of Western PA would like to thank each of the participants that contributed to the count this year. We are thankful that you joined us! A special thank you to the area leaders who help to compile bird numbers and participant information. Their work makes compiling the data for the count much easier, and undoubtedly more accurate.



IMMATURE RED-HEADED WOODPECKER. PHOTO BY DAN MENDENHALL

Outings to Come

Wow! That's A Lot of Bird Walks!

By Steve Thomas, Outings Director

Wednesday, March 20 - Woodcock Walks: Enjoy the woodcock walk again this spring with leader Tom Byrnes (724-715-7184). Meeting time will be 7:00 PM. We will drive a short distance to a field in Harmar Township that has produced lots of American Woodcock in the past several years. Be prepared for a muddy walk and bring a flashlight. Before going to the field, we will check the Great Blue Heron nest, which in previous years was an exciting find on this trip.

Directions: The meeting place is in the shopping center off the exit 11 of Route 28 and Freeport Road in Harmar. We will meet in the parking area located near the intersection of Anchor Dr. and Alpha Dr. within the shopping center (behind Gino's Restaurant). GPS coordinates: 40.5394261, -79.835610

Wednesday, March 27 - Woodcock Walks: Enjoy our second woodcock walk of this spring with leader Tom Byrnes (724-715-7184). Meeting time will be 7:00 PM. We will drive a short distance to a field in Harmar Township that has produced lots of American Woodcock in the past several years. Be prepared for a muddy walk and bring a flashlight. Before going to the field, we will check the Great Blue Heron nest, which in previous years was an exciting find on this trip.

Directions: The meeting place is in the shopping center off the exit 11 of Route 28 and Freeport Road in Harmar. We will meet in the parking area located near the intersection of Anchor Dr. and Alpha Dr. within the shopping center (behind Gino's Restaurant). GPS coordinates: -40.5394261, -79.835610

Saturday, March 30 – Moraine State Park: Meet Michael David (michaelt david@gmail.com) at 8:30 AM at McDanel's Boat Launch parking lot (GPS coordinates: 40.96675, -80.12497).

Directions: From I-79, take Route 422 east toward Butler and exit at the North Shore exit. Then travel West Park Road (0.3 mile) to North Shore Drive to McDanel's Road (300 feet). Allow one hour driving from Pittsburgh.

Waterfowl and early spring migrants will make for a nice outing.

Please E-Mail Michael (michaelt david@gmail.com) to let him know that you will be attending.

Sunday, March 17 - Pymatuning Area: Meet leader Ken Knapp (kcknapp50@gmail.com) at 8:00 AM in the parking lot of the former Pymatuning Wildlife Center, 12590 Hartstown Road, Linesville, PA. (GPS coordinates: 41.63526, -80.43404) for this half-day outing. Plenty of waterfowl species and a variety of raptors should be around. Sandhill Cranes are also a possibility. We will spend the morning visiting various locations in the area.

Please let Ken know that you are planning to attend by email (kcknapp50@gmail.com).

Saturday, April 6 – Yellow Creek: This outing will be a joint outing of the 3RBC and the Todd Bird Club. Meet Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493) at the park office at 8:00 AM. The Park office is located on Route 259 just off Route 422 east of Indiana. Allow an hour and a half to drive from Pittsburgh. The Park has a wide variety of habitats and a large lake that attracts a wide variety of waterbirds and sometimes exciting rarities.

Please E-Mail Margaret (bcoriole@windstream.net) to let her know you will be attending.

Wednesday, April 10 - Woodcock Walk: This will be the final woodcock walk of this spring with leader Tom Byrnes (724-715-7184). Meeting time will be 7:00 PM. We will drive a short distance to a field in Harmar Township that has produced lots of American Woodcock in the past several years. Be prepared for a muddy walk and bring a flashlight. Before going to the field, we will check the Great Blue Heron nest, which in previous years was an exciting find on this trip.

Directions: The meeting place is in the shopping center off the exit 11 of Route 28 and Freeport Road in Harmar. We will meet in the parking area located near the intersection of Anchor Dr. and Alpha Dr. within the shopping center (behind Gino's Restaurant). GPS coordinates: 40.5394261, -79.835610

Saturday, April 20 – Raccoon Creek State Park: This is combination bird and wildflower walk with the Brooks Bird Club, which is based in West Virginia. Ryan Tomazin (412-220-9726, vwwarblers@hotmail.com) will be leading the bird walk. We will meet at the Roadside Picnic Area West at 9:15 AM.

After checking out the picnic parking lot area, we then will drive to the beach and around the lake to continue our birding. There are no plans for a potluck lunch; therefore, people can bring their own lunches and everyone can use the picnic tables at Roadside Picnic Area West.

If there is any interest, and if the weather holds, people can bird and botanize the Wildflower Reserve. It should be the perfect time for wildflowers. If you have any questions, or would like to RSVP, please feel free to contact Ryan either by phone or by email. Hope to see you there!

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Outings to Come

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In case of inclement weather, the outing will be canceled, and it will not be rescheduled.

Directions: From Pittsburgh take Route 22/30 and exit at Imperial. Take Route 30 west to the Raccoon Creek State Park entrance, and drive through the park to the Roadside West picnic area.

Sunday, April 21 – Duck Hollow: Meet Malcolm Kurtz (malcolmgardener101@gmail.com) at 8:00AM at the Duck Hollow Trail parking lot right on the river. We will spend about an hour and a half exploring the river and trail for waterfowl, early migrants and local birds. Parking lot GPS coordinates: 40.414571, -79.916642.

Directions for Duck Hollow are on the 3RBC website.

Friday, April 26 – Sewickley Heights Park: Sheree Daugherty (shereedaugherty@gmail.com), for our spring bird walk starting at 8:00AM in the upper parking lot. See the 3RBC website for directions. Be prepared for muddy trails. This park is noted for having a variety of spring bird migrants such as warblers, vireos and other bird species surprises.

Friday, May 3 – Sewickley Heights Park: Sheree Daugherty (shereedaugherty@gmail.com), for our second spring bird walk starting at 8:00AM in the upper parking lot. See the 3RBC website for directions. Be prepared for muddy trails.

Friday, May 10 - North Park: We will meet our leader Adrian Fenton at the Gold Star Pavilion in North Park on Lake Shore Drive at 7:30 AM. GPS coordinates: 40.593884, -80.003844.

We will bird Gold Star wetlands area, Marshall Lake, and, if time permits, part of Latodomi Nature Center.

Adrian would like participants to email him at AFe9963285@aol.com to let him know you plan to attend.

Saturday, May 11 – Deer Lakes County Park: Meet Oliver Lindhiem (ojlindhiem@gmail.com) and John Vassallo (johnvassallo@yahoo.com) at 7:30 AM at the park. Our meeting place will be at the parking lot at these GPS coordinates: 40.618722, -79.815371. From Creighton-Russelton Road, enter the park (Kurn Road), drive by two ponds on the right, then make a right turn and proceed to the last parking lot. Although the trails are pretty well maintained, please dress for possible wet grass, mud and rainfall.

Saturday, May 18 - Linda's Farm: Linda Croskey has invited us to visit her farm for this bird walk. We will meet at 8:00 AM at 882 Deer Creek Road, Gibsonia 15044. Location is northern Allegheny County in West Deer Township, there will be a sign at the end of the driveway. (Across the road is Harvest Valley Farm). Linda's farm is comprised of a variety of natural habitats; several acres of goldenrod fields, farm fields with brushy edges, mature deciduous trees, several wildflower and milkweed meadows. This attracts grassland birds, warblers, and many spring migrants. Dress for ticks and bring water and snacks. Walking is mostly level along paths with few hills over uneven terrain.

For additional directions call Linda at 724-612-9963 or email lcroskey@consolidated.net.

Sunday, May 19 – Harrison Hills: Meet leader Dave Brooke (724-487-3586) at 8:00 AM at this county park off Freeport Road between Natrona Heights and Freeport. We will be meeting and starting our walk at the Rachel Carson parking lot near the pond. As you enter the park, bear right and proceed to the parking lot at the end of the road. Dress for wet grass and mud. Previous spring outings have produced a nice variety of migrants, including warblers, and vireos.

Saturday, June 8 – Picnic at Harrison Hills: We will hold our 3RCB picnic this year at Harrison Hills Park on Saturday, June 8th. This will be a *bring your own lunch picnic* starting at 12:00 PM at the Yakaon pavilion. The pavilion is located across from the environmental center. As you enter the park stay left, and then turn left at the first intersection and go up the hill to the large parking lot.

Prior to the picnic we will be having a bird walk starting at 9:00 AM. The walk will start at the Rachel Carson parking lot near the pond. As you enter the park, bear right and proceed to the parking lot at the end of the road.

3RBC Birder News and Notes

From Margie Kern: “I want to comment on the article in the November-December 2023 issue of *The Peregrine* about ‘yard birds’ at the Lynch homestead. That is not just a yard. It is heaven. I have visited Pat and Sherron and can tell you that their yard is an oasis. If I lived there I would get nothing done because I would have myself parked at the big kitchen window every minute to watch the feeders and pond. My most precious memory is when Pat and Sherron invited me to stop by to watch for the Common Redpolls. That was a life bird for me. And the experience came with a mug of delicious hot chocolate that Sherron graciously made for me. I am forever grateful for such a wonderful birding friendship.”

Michelle Kienholz added the 190th species to the list of birds at Harrison Hills Park in northeastern Allegheny when she spotted a Black Vulture in August 2023. The 500-acre county park with its varied array of habitats was opened to the public in 1970, and many birders have added species. Rarities include Loggerhead Shrike, Northern Shrike, Western Tanager, Henslow's Sparrow, and Clay-colored Sparrow. Paul Hess and Dave Brooke have updated the park's bird list, which will soon be available at the park's Environmental Center.

3RBC birders who visited Powdermill in the early 2000s will remember GIS specialist, Tricia Miller, was working on risks of wind energy development to migrating Golden Eagles in PA for her Ph.D. Trish is now Executive Director and Senior Research Wildlife Biologist at Conservation Science Global, Inc. at West Cape May, NJ. She recently co-authored “Variation in flight characteristics associated with entry by eagles into rotor-swept zones of wind turbines” (*Ibis* Vol. 166 issue 1, pp. 308-314).

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Sadness at the Passing of a Talented Photographer

The club lost a very talented photographer and extremely pleasant person recently. Cris L. Hamilton, who joined 3RBC in 2006 “to learn more about birds, and their habitat and way of life,” passed away too soon at the age of 71. Cris loved photographing birds, animals, and nature, traveling to all the nearby hotspots as well as faraway places like the Rio Grande birding trail, Bosque del Apache, and Florida. She even went to Costa Rica, Africa, and the Falkland Islands with her cameras. Cris spoke to the club in October 2013 on her trips to the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia, the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, and Costa Rica. She and her talented eye will be sorely missed.

Tales of Two Turkeys

By Pat and Sherron Lynch

For more than two decades, turkeys have roamed the neighborhood almost daily. They feed under our bird feeders and around our five acres. We've observed various behaviors including courtship displaying and mating. Once a hen even laid an egg next to our pond. Intense fights have occurred among several toms as others have rushed to observe. Turkeys have flown onto our swing, barn roof, and sunroom roof. It's always a pleasure to see the new poults arrive in the yard. When something unusual catches our attention, a note is made on the daily bird checklist that is always on our kitchen table. Pat summarizes our notes on the computer every month.

Where did these turkeys come from? We always suspected that our turkeys were descendants of some of the birds raised in North Park by the Pennsylvania Game Commission with the assistance of Allegheny County workers in the park. A reintroduction program from the mid-1900's involved setting up fenced areas with incubators, brooders, and rearing pens to raise and release young turkeys throughout the Commonwealth. North Park Naturalist, Meg Scanlon, was able to fill in some blanks that this particular facility was probably last used in the 1960's or early 1970's, and then torn down over the next ten to fifteen years. Nevertheless, fencing materials from that program are still scattered through the park. The Wild Turkeys now living in North Park are counted for the Pittsburgh Christmas Bird Count Circle, but the rafter of turkeys in our yard counts for the more recently formed South Butler CBC.

#P7055 Turkey: *The Peregrine* readers may recall our article on turkey banding in the November/December 2010 issue. On August 24, 2009 we reported seeing two banded turkeys, #P7056 and #P7055, to the game commission. These birds had been banded within a mile of our house in 2009. At the time we thought that #P7056 was more important because it also had a reward tag on its leg. #P7056 stayed with the group for only about a year. #P7055 remained with the flock for years, becoming a leader and probably mating with many of the hens. During its last year, its eyesight failed and other males attacked it. We were saddened to see its diminished state, and it disappeared in mid-July of 2017.

While walking the neighbor's field on March 31, 2018, we were surprised to find a pile of bleached turkey bones with a band on one



WHAT CAN THAT BAND TELL US? PAT AND SHERRON LYNCH LEARNED THAT THEIR WELL-KNOWN LOCAL TURKEY WAS QUITE NOTEWORTHY!

leg bone. These were the remains of #P7055. Sherron kept the leg bone with the band.

Pat recently was talking to Mary Jo Casalena, PA Game Commission Wildlife Biologist, and he mentioned our having found the band of #P7055. She quickly looked up its information and became excited. Wild Turkeys usually do not live longer than four years. #P7055 was over two years old when they banded him, so he had lived for over ten years, making him the oldest documented tom turkey in Pennsylvania. Females tend to survive longer than males; the oldest recorded hen lived to twelve and a half years. Needless to say, we were ecstatic. If you ever see a banded turkey (or any banded bird) and can read its number, report it to the Bird Banding Lab (www.reportband.gov), and you'll be a Citizen Scientist, too.

Arrowhead Turkey: On the morning of November 19, 2023, Sherron groaned in dismay as she noticed one of the eight adult males appeared to be injured. At first we thought that a stick was stuck along its side. Then, in horror, we realized that an arrow's metal head protruded more than a foot from the turkey's body. We observed the tom from several angles, but could not determine exactly where the base of the shaft was attached to the turkey. Perhaps it was caught in a clump of feathers between the body and the tail. Surprisingly the tom seemed healthy, was accepted by the other males, and even hopped atop a stump. It only appeared hampered by the arrow as it attempted to run, but we were concerned that it probably would not survive for long. Sherron named it "Arrowhead." And she carefully monitored it day after day when it came with the other turkeys. We were concerned that if we tried to capture Arrowhead and remove the arrow, we might cause the turkey greater harm. Sometimes Arrowhead labored as the shaft or arrow's head became tangled with bushes or fencing. The stubborn tom managed to break free of the obstacles and continued with the other birds. We began to hope that it might survive.

On December 10, Sherron was alarmed that the tom was struggling desperately because the arrowhead was stuck in the metal garden fencing. As Pat prepared to free the tom, Sherron gave a joyous shout. Arrowhead had gained its freedom after 21 days as it was able to pull away from the shaft. We were thrilled. We believe that Arrowhead is still one of the eight toms who are often together.

Did Arrowhead deliberately entangle the shaft on occasions in efforts to remove the burdensome arrow? Pat asked Mary Jo Casalena that question. She replied that turkeys will deliberately rub against various surfaces to pry off items stuck to their bodies. They will also use their beaks and their feet to do so. This is the first time that Mary Jo had heard of a turkey being able to dislodge an arrow in this method. Our Arrowhead is one special turkey!

Giant Step Forward

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several standing committees will offer opportunities for members to contribute their own expertise to assist and advise the Board.

Importantly, our new non-profit status means that moving forward all donations to 3RBC, including membership fees, will be fully tax-deductible. In the coming months, our official by-laws will be available on our website, providing full transparency about the club's new structure and operations. In the meantime, you can see a full list of 3RBC's board members at <https://3rbc.org/about.html>. As we grow our new non-profit identity, we will appreciate your patience and support. Rest assured our new governance structure helps ensure the longevity of the Three Rivers Birding Club for generations to come. I encourage you to speak to any 3RBC officer or Board Member if you have questions or suggestions, and thank you for being part of our journey as we move confidently forward!

Turkey Tale Update

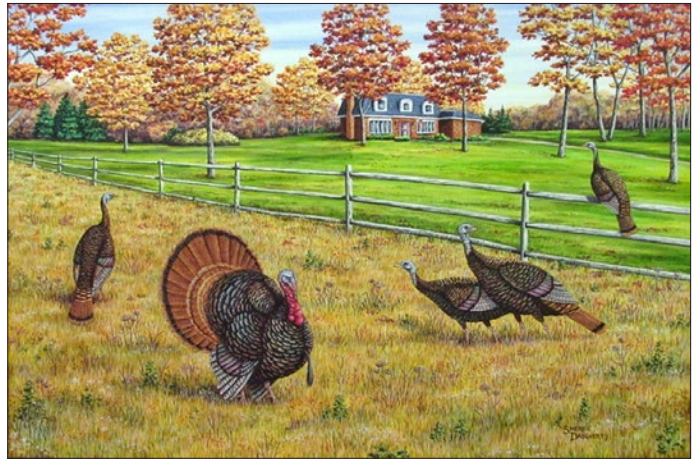
By Pat and Sherron Lynch

We recently volunteered to participate in the Pennsylvania Game Commission's 10-year program of banding male turkeys. The process of banding wildlife has always fascinated us. For several years we enjoyed hosting Bob Mulvihill and his crew, who visited once a summer to band birds for the Smithsonian's Neighborhood Nestwatch project.

Two PGC staffers arrived early, took information from us, examined the terrain carefully for obstacles which might damage their rocket-propelled net, and then showed us where and how to spread cracked corn in a V-shaped area. We were happy to report that the turkeys quickly became acclimated to eating in that area, and the biologists set the target date to be Groundhog's Day. We invited our friends Sheree Daugherty and Frank Moone to join us.

The banding team of Steve Carney, Travis Mohrbacher, and Dan Puhala, arrived before dawn and rapidly, but carefully, set up the netting equipment and the connecting wire to the controls. They covered the wire so that the turkeys would not shy from the area. Then came the expectant waiting in the sunroom. The turkeys might come soon or perhaps much later in the day. A large mixed group of hens and jakes arrived after an hour. The men didn't want to trap the jakes because of the large number of hens present. This flock eventually moved on. Not too much later the regular group of eight toms arrived and rushed to the corn patch. At 9:40 the net was deployed with a loud boom similar to a shotgun blast. The men rushed to secure the net and to place blankets over the turkeys to calm them.

Travis had the unenviable task of holding up a 20-plus pound-turkey, as Steve would examine the length of the spurs and the beard. Right spurs ranged from 20 to 30 mm, left spurs from 15 to 30 mm, and beards from 23 to 27 cm. Dan recorded the information and also banded the turkeys. He also attached a reward band to each of three turkeys. Although one of the eight turkeys had managed to slip away as its fellow toms were being banded, the three men were delighted with the results, and we were impressed by their professionalism. The four of us (Frank, Sheree, Sherron, and Pat), were also exhilarated to be able to experience this research in action. We likely won't see another #P7055, but we will be able to watch these newly banded toms for at least a few more years.



A BEAUTIFUL PAINTING OF WILD TURKEYS NEAR THE LYNCHES' HOME BY THEIR FRIEND AND PAST 3RBC PRESIDENT, SHEREE DAUGHERTY.



PAT LYNCH, STEVE CARNEY, AND SHERRON LYNCH POSING WITH THE BANDED TOM TURKEY.



The Peregrine

Birds in the Three Rivers Area

October – November 2023

By Mike Fialkovich, Bird Reports Editor

A blue morph **Snow Goose** was at Chapel Harbor 11/30 (JDz, JR, m.ob.).

A flock of 19 **Tundra Swans** flying over West Deer Twp. 10/30 (LC) was early. Several flocks were noted flying over 11/23 including 100 in Indiana Twp. (DYe), 12 at Highland Park (JL), 32 in Squirrel Hill (AP) and an unknown number over Plum (AH, PM). Several flocks totaling 142 swans flew over Franklin Park 11/24 (OM); 24 flew over Peter's Creek 11/28 (JF).

There were a few surprisingly large flocks of **Blue-winged Teal** reported including 42 at Dashiels Dam 10/6 (MV) and 63 in Oakmont 10/6 (SK, MF). Other notable flocks include 13 at Duck Hollow 10/3 (RB, et al.) and 19 at North Park 10/6 (CKo). A **Gadwall** was at the Leetsdale Boat Launch 10/22-29 (MV). A few were present at the Harmar Twp. Marsh 11/2-16 with a high count of 10 during that period (m.ob.) and four were at Dashiels 11/5 (MV). A great count of 17 **Northern Pintail** were at Dashiels 11/28 (AF). A female or immature **Black Scoter** was on the Ohio River near Dashiels Dam 11/26-27 (MV). A **Ruddy Duck** was at Imperial 11/2 (DB).

A **Ruffed Grouse** was in Cecil Twp. 11/19 (DNe, NN). It's been years since a grouse was reported in the county.

A late **Common Nighthawk** was at Frick Park 10/18 (KSJ, CK).

Two **Sora** were at North Park 10/10-13 (AF, m.ob.) and one was seen 10/18. Rails are always a good find in the county and with more birders these days, more are being found.

An **American Avocet** was a nice surprise at Duck Hollow 10/3 (LK). A total of 39 **Killdeer** were at Hampton Community Park 11/8 (DN). Two were at Duck Hollow 11/23 (MF) and 31 were in South Park 11/26 (eBird). Three **Dunlin** were at Duck Hollow 11/2 (LK). This species was present at Imperial 11/2-19 (DB, AF, m.ob.) with a high count of ten 11/11. A very late **Least Sandpiper** was at Imperial 11/11-12 (MV). A **Pectoral Sandpiper** at Imperial continued from the last reporting period to 10/28 (JK, m.ob.). Three were there 10/6 (MV). Late **Spotted Sandpipers** include single birds at Duck Hollow 10/14-26 (JF, et al.), North Park 10/23 (LS, ME) and Sharpsburg 11/7 (JK). A late **Solitary Sandpiper** was at North Park 10/14-23 (m.ob.). A late **Greater Yellowlegs** was photographed at North Park 11/14 (GH).

Two **Bonaparte's Gulls** were photographed at Emsworth Dam 10/23 (GH). A late **Common Tern** was well described in eBird at Riverfront Park on the Southside 10/23 (CC).

A **Black-crowned Night-Heron** was photographed at Duck Hollow after dark 11/12 (Duck Hollow Facebook Page). A **Cattle Egret** was along the Allegheny River in Oakmont 10/23-24 (JD, et al.) providing just the third county record. The last was in November 2010.

Four **Black Vultures** were at Beechwood Farms 11/5 (DM, STh) and three were at Chapel Harbor 11/6 (KSJ).

Also in the upper fields of North Park a **Short-eared Owl** was quite a surprise 11/20 (AF). The bird flew in, landed in a tree just long enough for the observer to take a photo, then it flew off and was not relocated. Fifteen **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were banded at Sewickley Heights Park in November (RM, TB, et al.).

An immature **Red-headed Woodpecker** visited a backyard in

Pine Twp. 10/28 (PL, SL).

A late **Great Crested Flycatcher** was at Frick Park 10/3 (SA). A late **Eastern Phoebe** was at Peter's Creek 11/28 (JF).

A late **Blue-headed Vireo** was in Wilkesburg 11/2 (CT).

American Crows staging in Oakland prior to going to the winter roost include 2500 that were counted 10/16 (KSJ) and 3000 11/28 (KSJ).

There were several reports of **Marsh Wren** including one at North Park 10/10-18 (AF, m.ob.), one at Wingfield Pines 10/18 (JF) and one at Homewood Cemetery 10/30 (MK).

A late **Gray Catbird** was in Etna 11/30 (DY). A late **Swainson's Thrush** was spotted at Frick Park 11/7 (KSJ, CK).

It was nice to see some **American Pipit** reports. Four were at Imperial 10/7 (OL), 53 were at a grassland in Forward Twp. 11/17 (JF, JP) and two flew over Boyce-Mayview Park 11/28 (ST).

Pine Siskins were reported from at least six locations from 10/19-11/24 with a high count of 22 at Hartwood Acres 10/24 (m.ob.).

A **Snow Bunting** was a nice find at Imperial 11/30 (MV); the only reliable place in the county to find them.

A male "**Cassiar**" **Dark-eyed Junco** was found in Homewood Cemetery 11/26 (MK). Two **Vesper Sparrows** were at South Taylor Environmental Center in West Mifflin 10/30 (JF, LF). This species is rare away from Imperial (where they are severely declining).

Rusty Blackbird is always a welcomed species to find in the county. One was at Frick Park 11/5 (MK) and one was at North Park 11/8-11 (AF, et al.).

An **Orange-crowned Warbler** was at North Park 10/14-17 (EW, DB, ZV). A somewhat late **Nashville Warbler** was at North Park 10/22 (m.ob.). Late **Common Yellowthroats** include one at the PennDot Wetlands 10/26 (JS) and one at North Park 11/2 (AF). A somewhat late **Magnolia Warbler** was at Beechwood Farms 10/22 (STh). Late **Palm Warblers** were at Schenley Park 11/1 (KSJ) and North Park 11/1 (AF).

Observers: Sameer Apte, David Bennett, Trip Bondi, Ron Burkert, Linda Croskey, Chapin Czarnecki, Jeff Davis, John Dzikiv (JDz), Mary Eyman, Adrian Fenton, Leslie Ferree, Mike Fialkovich, John Flannigan, Gene Henderson, Amy Henrici, Lisa Kaufman, Charity Kleshgi, Michelle Kienholz, Scott Kinzey, Justin Kolakowski, Charles Kollar (CKo), Judy Lesso, Oliver Lindhiem, Pat Lynch, Sherron Lynch, Pat McShea, Dan Mendenhall, Oscar Miller, Robert Mulvihill (RM), Dean Newhouse (DNe), Norma Newhouse, Dick Nugent, Joe Papp, Aidan Place, Julia Roberson, Kate St. John, James Saracco, Liz Spence, Steve Thomas (STh), Shannon Thompson, Christopher Turbert, Mark Vass, Zachary Vaughan, Ezra White, Dan Yagusic, David Yeany II (DYe), m.ob. (many observers)



The Peregrine



By Amber Wiewel

Pennsylvania's Third Bird Atlas launched on January 1, 2024. Yes, has already been 20 years since the start of the 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas (2nd PPBA)! And just like the two bird atlases before, we need birders to rally to the cause and help make this atlas a great success!

Hawk Mountain Sanctuary and the Pennsylvania Game Commission are the sponsors of this statewide community science project to determine when and where the state's 190 species of nesting birds are breeding; and *for the very first time*, determine how many bird species winter in Pennsylvania and what their distributions are, too. That's why it is being called PBA3, instead of the 3rd PBBA—it will be a two-season bird atlas.

Of course, PBA3 will provide important updates to Pennsylvania's first two breeding bird atlases, which took place in the 1980s and early 2000s. During the second atlas from 2004-2009, nearly 2000 volunteers contributed 854,773 records from across the state, documenting both dramatic declines and exciting range expansions in our state's avifauna since the first atlas. Now, twenty years later, it is time to repeat this tremendous effort, but we can only do it with the support of birders in the 3RBC and other bird clubs all around the state.

Over the next five years, as a volunteer Atlaser, you will record bird species and breeding behaviors such as territorial birds, courtship, and nest building in any of the more than 4,000 atlas blocks in the state, and this time you will submit your observations directly into a special *Pennsylvania Bird Atlas* portal in eBird. If you do not already have an eBird login,

You can sign up here: <https://ebird.org/home>.

Learn how to use eBird here: <https://support.ebird.org/en/support/solutions>

Access the *Pennsylvania Bird Atlas* portal in eBird here: <https://ebird.org/ebird/atlaspa/about/using-the-pennsylvania-bird-atlas-portal/>

Then, by simply using the eBird app on your phone, you can do field work for PBA3 as easily as going birding, and your observations will go straight into the database—no forms to fill out or mail in!

Best of all, the data you help organizers collect during PBA3 will be important for updating and revising Pennsylvania's list of species of conservation concern, and it will be very helpful for identifying important habitats and conservation priorities in the state for the next twenty years. Importantly, birders of all skill levels can help, and their participation, however big or small, will contribute to bird conservation efforts in Pennsylvania!

Atlas Who's Who?

Project Coordinator is Amber Wiewel (Wiewel@hawkmountain.org)

Southwest Regional Coordinators are Janet and Tom Kuehl (tjk.kuehl@gmail.com)

Your local county coordinators are:

Allegheny – Mike Fialkovich (mpfial@verizon.net) and Brian Shema (brian.shema@icloud.com)

Armstrong – Jim Kellam (james.kellam@stvincent.edu)

Beaver – **coordinator needed!** Contact the Kuehls if you can help.

Butler – Glenn Koppel (macatilly@gmail.com) and Oscar Miller (aoscarmiller3@gmail.com)

Clarion – Carole Winslow (cjwinslow94@gmail.com)

Fayette – Alex Busato (PBA3.Fayette@gmail.com)

Greene – Marjorie Howard (rkbirdclub@yahoo.com)

Indiana – Marg and Roger Higbee (PBA3.Indiana@gmail.com)

Jefferson – Don Nixon (pamerlins@gmail.com)

Lawrence –

Washington – Gigi Gerben and Luke Gerben Kaspar (PBA3.Washington@gmail.com)

Westmoreland – Janet and Tom Kuehl (tjk.kuehl@gmail.com)

Helpful Links to Get You Started:

- <https://ebird.org/atlaspa/home>
- <https://ebird.org/atlaspa/about/quick-start-guide/>
- <https://ebird.org/atlaspa/about/data-submission-and-how-to-get-started-atlasing>
- <https://bit.ly/PBA3volhb> (PBA3 Volunteer Handbook)
- <https://bit.ly/PBA3broch> (PBA3 trifold brochure)

