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The Peregrine

Three Rivers Birding Club Newsletter

Vol. 26, No. 2 March/April 2026

Dr. Scott K. Robinson Will Discuss What Bird Migrants Need At Our Next Meeting

At our April meeting we will welcome a new speaker, Scott K. Robinson, the Katharine Ordway Professor of Ecosystem Conservation at the Florida Museum of Natural History. His topic will be "What resources do migratory landbirds need in spring and fall?" Migrating birds need, foremost, protein-rich food, as well as water, safe stopover sites, and few hazards to impede their journey. Scott will elaborate on the necessary requirements for birds' successful migration.

Scott has a long history as a premier ornithologist. He is a community and conservation biologist, but he also works on many behavioral ecological issues, especially with flocking species. He has worked with Kenn Kaufman, Ted Parker, John Terborgh, and Richard T. Holmes. In 1982, Scott and Ted Parker and their team set a Big Day record for the most species of birds observed at a site in a single day at the Cocha Cashu Biological Station in Peru. Scott was awarded the Loye and Alden Miller Research Award by the American Ornithological Society in 2025, recognizing his lifetime achievements in ornithological research.

Scott was born and raised in Pittsburgh where his father, a former president of the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania, taught him birds starting practically in infancy. He earned his B.A. from Dartmouth College in 1978, and his Ph.D. from Princeton University in 1984. Early in his career he participated in the Hubbard Brook Ecosystem Study and later was employed at the Illinois Natural History Survey and the University of Illinois, where he continued to study tropical birds. Scott has worked extensively in both North and South America. Scott has also contributed to numerous scholarly papers during his career.

Scott Robinson lives in the Gainesville, Florida area and is currently the Ordway Lab Director at the Florida Museum of Natural History of the University of Florida.

Remember, our April meeting is on the **second** Wednesday of the month, April 8, 2026.

It will be a *hybrid* meeting starting "live" in Beechwood Farms at 6:30 PM (ET) and a Zoom presentation starting at 7:00 PM (ET) giving you time to log on. The business meeting will begin at 7:30 PM, and Scott's program will start around 8:00 PM. Details on how to join the Zoom event, including passcodes and other instructions, will be supplied a few days before the meeting.



OUR SPEAKER, DR. SCOTT ROBINSON, BIRDING BY DUGOUT!

Future 3RBC Meeting Presentations

Don't forget to save the date for these upcoming speakers:

- June 3, 2026 - **Amanda Haney** - "*Trinidad and Tobago*"
- August 5, 2026 - **Frank Izaguirre** - Topic TBA
- October 7, 2026 - **Brian Shema** - "*Chimney Swift Research*"

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

The Peregrine

President's Message

Freezing Waters and Eurasian Vagrants Enliven Winter Birding

Mike Fialkovich, President, Three Rivers Birding Club

In my previous President's Message, I wrote about winter birding and what to look for and the potential birding rewards. Well, this season definitely provided local and statewide winter birding excitement!

Winter Waterfowl and Gulls

This winter was notable with a major snowstorm in January, followed by the Great Lakes and local rivers freezing. When Lake Erie and Lake Ontario freeze, we typically get waterfowl and gulls locally. The birds need to move south to find open water or they face starvation. In addition, open water provides a safe place to rest, though it's not completely without dangers. Birders observed the local Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcons making passes at the waterfowl and gulls, sending them in a panic as they evaded the predators.

The areas with moving water around the locks and dams kept some water open that attracted large numbers of ducks. The numbers were very notable for us with triple digit figures Common Goldeneye at the Natrona Dam, numbers we have not seen in the area for a long time, if ever. The number of Canvasbacks were also impressive with double digit figures at Duck Hollow, Dashields Dam and Emsworth Dam. Common Merganser numbers reached nearly 100 at the Braddock Dam and around Brunots Island. These numbers were probably local birds concentrating, supplemented by birds from further north. Lake Ontario is a wintering site for White-winged Scoters and Long-tailed Ducks. A dozen White-winged Scoters at Brunots Island on the Ohio River were very notable, but there was also a mystery. Where were the Long-tailed Ducks? Only one or two were found during this event. Where else could they have gone? The same can be said for Red-necked Grebes. When Lake Ontario freezes, we typically have an invasion of Red-necked Grebes, but only a single bird was reported. While we can predict most of what birds to expect, there are still surprises and questions that remain unanswered.

Rare gulls were also in the area with several Great Black-backed and Lesser Black-backed, along with a few Iceland Gulls.

Eurasian Invasion!

On a statewide perspective, three species from Eurasia made visits to Pennsylvania this winter. A female **Garganey** was discovered in Bedford County at a small reservoir in the town of Woodbury in December 2025, a first for Pennsylvania. After a few days, she disappeared only to be relocated in February 2026 but was only seen for two days: Monday, February 9 and a Friday, February 13. Garganey are in the teal family and this female was associating with five Green-winged Teal (a male and four females). Female Garganey are very similar to female Green-winged Teal. The facial pattern of female Garganey is more complex and contrasting than Green-winged Teal with dark brown stripes behind the eye and along the cheek and a dark cap. Female Garganey also lack the broad cream colored stripe along the side of the tail that is obvious in Green-winged Teal. Garganey are also slightly larger overall. The birder who discovered her was a careful observer to note these subtle differences.

A male **Tufted Duck** was found on Schuylkill River in Northampton/Chester County February 12. Tufted Ducks and Garganey range across Europe and Asia but can occur regularly as vagrants in North America with most records from the west coast. Tufted Ducks have been recorded with some regularity on the northeast coast. This is the 12th occurrence of this species in

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Three Rivers Birding Club Newsletter
Published bimonthly:
January, March, May, July, September, November

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Pennsylvania.

Finally, a female **Common Chaffinch** was discovered visiting a feeder in Northampton County, just a few miles from the Tufted Duck location! This is a first for Pennsylvania. Other North American records are from northeast and the upper mid-west. Common Chaffinch ranges throughout Europe and Asia.

Three Eurasian species at the same time in Pennsylvania is amazing! The thought is all these birds arrived in North America via storms with northeast winds. There was a large movement of Chaffinches this fall to Iceland this past fall, so it's possible a storm brought this bird to Pennsylvania.

Winter can be an exciting time to go birding!



REDHEAD NEAR BRADDOCK IN JANUARY. DAN MENDENHALL

The Peregrine

Outings to come

Spring Outings March – May 2026

Steve Thomas, Outings Coordinator

Please note: All of the *Woodcock outings* listed below, will have the same starting location as last year. Directions: GPS coordinates: 40.540648, -79.81052. From PA Route 28 exit 11 turn left and head east on Freeport Road. Continue under the Turnpike and travel 0.6 miles until you see the parking lot on the left. (Harmar House).

Wednesday, March 18 - Woodcock Walk. 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 and for possible cormorants, which in previous years were exciting finds on this trip.

Sunday, March 22 – 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 (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 email Ken to let him know you are planning to attend.

Wednesday, March 25 - 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 and for possible cormorants, which in previous years were exciting finds on this trip.

Wednesday, April 1 - 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 and for possible cormorants, which in previous years were exciting finds on this trip.

Saturday, April 4 – Yellow Creek. This outing will be a joint outing of the 3RBC and the Todd Bird Club. Meet Sue Dickson (724-388-5000) 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.

Saturday, April 25 – Sewickley Heights Park. This walk is intended for beginning/inexperienced birders and will be limited to the first six people who email the walk leader **Adrian Fenton** at AF9963285@aol.com. Sewickley Heights Park is an excellent location for seeing spring migrants. We will go slowly to give everyone the opportunity to see and identify birds. The starting time will be at 7:30 AM in the upper parking lot. See 3RBC.org for directions. Bring binoculars.

Friday, May 1– Sewickley Heights Park. Join 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.

Saturday, May 2 – Boys Home Park in South Fayette Township. Meet Malcolm Kurtz (malcolmwkurtz@gmail.com) at 8:30AM at the parking lot at the end of Rutherglen Drive. This birding location is an eBird hotspot and an opportunity for an outing in the South Hills. GPS coordinates: 40.385180, -80.175165.

Friday, May 8 - North Park. We will meet our leader Adrian Fenton (AF9963285@aol.com) 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. Please email Adrian if you plan to attend.

Saturday, May 9 – 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 at the Environmental Learning Center parking lot. GPS: 40.6572, -79.7024. 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. Dress for wet grass and mud. Previous spring outings have produced a nice variety of migrants, including warblers, and vireos.

Saturday, May 16 – Deer Lakes County Park. John Vassallo (johnvassallo@yahoo.com) and Todd Hooe will lead us on their annual Deer Lakes County Park outing. Our 7:30 AM 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.

Tuesday, May 19 - Frick Park. Meet Charity Khesghi (charitykhesghi@gmail.com) and co-leader Kate St. John (<https://www.birdsoutsidemymywindow.org/>) for a mid-week bird walk in Frick Park. We will start at the Blue Slide entrance at 8:30 AM and bird until 10:30AM. Blue Slide entrance is on Beechwood Blvd. at Nicolson St. 40.43007, -79.91482. We will do our best to avoid the worst of the hills and hope to see the spring migrants that visit here.

Format for *The Peregrine* submissions

We very much appreciate member contributions to our newsletter! Please submit your articles in the following format:

- Submit as an attachment to: 3RBC.Peregrine@gmail.com
- Files should be in .doc format (Google Docs, Word, etc.).
- Please use regular sentence case. Do not use Small Caps, ALL CAPS, unless needed for an acronym (NASA, for example)
- Include hyperlinks as needed.
- Accompanying photos should be sent as separate attachments,
- All photos should include: Photographer name, subject names and/or species names, and location, if applicable. You may also include a brief narrative of the photo. This can be a separate word document, and all your photo captions can be listed there.

Items may be edited for grammar or space considerations.

Outings revisited

A Winter Outing Delayed by... Winter

Dead of Winter Outing—February 14, 2026. The winter weather delayed this outing twice, as it was scheduled for late January, but did not occur until mid-February.

A group of 11 birders gathered at the Frick Environmental Center on a sunny and seasonal morning with temperatures just above freezing at the start of the walk.

We started at the center's feeders, where we saw a few overwintering Red-winged Blackbirds, Mourning Doves, Northern Cardinals, House Finches, and Dark-eyed Juncos. Song Sparrows were singing, a sign of the coming spring. Two Red-bellied Woodpeckers perched perfectly for us to actually see their red bellies. I shared my experience of observing them to be dominant at bird feeders. A Fish Crow was heard calling in the distance.

The trails were snow and ice covered, but we were able to navigate by walking on the snow covered edges, where we had traction. Once into Falls Ravine, the trails were clear due to recent maintenance work. It was a nice break to walk on cleared trails. The ravine was fairly quiet on the trip down, but we did have good views of a pair of Red-tailed Hawks, and we heard some chickadees and Tufted Titmice calling.

We checked for the Barred Owl pair, and Michelle Kienhotz showed us a bird in a roosting cavity. We could only see its head, but that was pleasing to the group and worth the difficult walk in the snow. We also heard a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker calling, but it was too far away to see, unfortunately.

There was more activity on the return trip to the parking lot through Falls Ravine. About a dozen American Robins were digging in the leaves on the forest floor; the sounds of rustling leaves filled the air and visually leaves were being thrown around as they were digging. Two Golden-crowned Kinglets were a treat along the trail.—**by leader, Mike Fialkovich**



TINY GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLETS ENLIVEN ANY WINTER OUTING WITH THEIR OUTSIZED PERSONALITIES. THEIR LIVELY ANTICS CAN BE A CHALLENGE TO PHOTOGRAPH, THOUGH! THANKS TO DAN MENDENHALL FOR SHARING THIS ACTION SHOT.

In Memoriam, Joyce Hoffmann

By Mike Fialkovich

3RBC member, Joyce Hoffmann, passed away in December after a lengthy battle with Parkinson's disease.

I met Joyce on an outing to Presque Isle April 2, 1989. It was my first real birding trip to Presque Isle, and I was amazed at the variety of waterfowl. We stopped at almost every pond where Joyce would jump out of the car to identify the ducks.



There were also five Little Gulls and a Black-headed Gull off Beach 11 found by local Presque Isle birders and both were life birds for outing participants. She showed me my first Golden-winged Warblers and Eastern Whip-poor-wills.

I remember her admiring a Black-bellied Plover at Shenango Lake one fall. The bird was still in striking full plumage, and she remarked how gorgeous that bird was and said "How could people not like birding?!"

Joyce was among the founding members of our club, and she led many outings for us. She always made an effort to get people on the bird and was good at describing a bird's location. In one of our old newsletters there was an article about some of our leaders, and she was one mentioned. Comments by members included how good a leader she was, and she told me when she read the comments, she was so moved, she cried. She felt appreciated.

One of Joyce's sayings was "Is it well time?" which came from standing at one spot for some time and not seeing anything new. She or someone in the group would say "well?" as in "Well, is it time to move on?" So the saying meant she was ready to move on to another location. It was often met with a laugh by those around her.

Those of us who birded with her knew her choice at a fast food restaurant, when we would stop for lunch. It was chicken sandwich, lettuce only. She wanted nothing more. Mayo was out, and so were most cheeses. She would often bring a Sara Lee Crumb Coffee Cake to snack on during the drive to Erie. During drives to various locations we had many conversations beyond birds, including work, family and many other topics that made the drive seem faster.

Joyce loved listing and running around the state to see rarities. While she didn't keep many county lists, she was dedicated to her state list and life list. I ran into her in August 2023 at Moraine State Park, when a Limpkin was there, and as far as I'm aware, that was her last rare bird chase. She had some difficulty moving on the uneven terrain, but with help she was determined to see the bird. She also did some traveling around the country. I remember she saw 100 life birds in a trip to Arizona. Joyce was also part of the North Park Thursday Walkers.

Joyce was a good field trip leader, good birder and had an energetic birding style. She will be missed by those who spent many years birding with her.

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Observations

Bird Feeder Marauders

Story and photos by Tom Moeller

No birds were in the yard, a pile of feathers was in the snow, and a large bird was sitting on the fence with its back to our window. The bird's back was brownish with white splotches, and the tail hung straight down, barred brown and gray. A young accipiter, but which one? A closer look at the tail revealed three clues: it seemed square at the bottom, the end of the feathers only showed a narrow band of white, and the outer feathers seemed longer than the center feather. These are good indicators of a Sharp-shinned Hawk.

We set up feeders to attract songbirds to our yards, so we can watch them enjoy the seeds we put out for them. We have special foods for certain birds: Nyjer seeds for goldfinches, mealworms for Carolina Wrens, black oil seeds for Evening Grosbeaks, or oranges for orioles. However, this concentration of birds also attracts marauders, who like to dine on those gathered avians.



SUB-ADULT SHARP-SHINNED HAWK CONTEMPLATING ITS NEXT MEAL

Cooper's Hawks and Sharp-shinned Hawks are two raptors I've seen attracted to my feeders; that is, to those who visit my feeders. Often these hawks are first-year birds that may think catching a feeder bird is easy. They are only successful part of the time. The alarm goes out from songbird to songbird when a raptor is near. Some bolder, small birds may chatter at the marauder, but they are quicker to retire than the hawk may be in springing forth at them. Slower, larger birds like Mourning Doves, which "freeze" at signs of danger, are often the prey caught in my yard.

One time I saw a Blue Jay pecking at something in the yard. Binoculars showed to me it was another bird. When I went to

investigate, the Blue Jay had been pecking at a dead House Sparrow. Whether it had killed the House Sparrow, I don't know. Much did remain of the sparrow, but some of it was eaten by the jay.

Cats, especially feral cats, are bird marauders, too. We often try to chase cats away from the yard by banging on the window or waving a bag out the window at them. One day, however, I saw a cat staring up a goldfinch on a feeder right above it. The bird was about five feet up, but somehow the cat suddenly jumped from the ground straight up and grabbed the goldfinch in its mouth and ran off with it. A pet dog near a feeder is good, however, because it will chase cats, squirrels, and other critters away and not really bother the birds.

On December 11, 2025, a female House Finch was visiting our feeders, and I noticed a large gash on the side of her neck. It was



IMMATURE COOPER'S HAWK EATING ITS CATCH

bloody, so the attack on the bird had occurred that day or the day before. She was very alert and spent time eating on seeds from a seed block, meaning she had to dig them out of a cake of seeds. The left side of her neck had the gash, and it seemed to go up into her left eye. She often looked around with her "good" right eye. I have photos of her bloody wound.

Whatever had attacked the finch (hawk, cat, owl?) was not successful in killing her. I saw her again a couple of other times, and on January 11, 2026, a month later, I got more photos of the finch. Now her injured area was a dark patch on her neck. Her left eye seemed to be open, but whether she could see with that eye, I do not know. She was still alert and busy eating, and still seemed to be



BLUE JAY FEEDING ON A HOUSE SPARROW

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Observations

continued from page 5



AN INJURED FEMALE HOUSE FINCH THAT SURVIVED TO EAT ANOTHER DAY.

looking around closely with her right eye. A rare survivor of an attack!

Nests appear in the spring and summer in the area around bird feeders along with nest marauders, like crows and Blue Jays. Being bigger birds, they can overpower an occupied nest and take either eggs or nestlings from robins, cardinals, and others, whose nest are more accessible than those built in thickets or birdhouses. After such an attack, robins are known to wail a high, piercing whistle as if in mourning. Yet, House Sparrows are known to clear out nest boxes of bluebirds and House Wrens to take over for their own use. That includes nests, eggs, or nestlings. Birds that may build nests on the ground (sparrows, ducks, geese, plovers, etc.) are subject to predation by snakes, raccoons, and even other birds.

Threats to birds at the feeders are there, but their occurrence is rare. The majority of the time birds visit feeders with no incidents, other than squabbles over who gets to be on the feeder. Bigger birds push away smaller ones, and more aggressive small bird, i.e.: Song Sparrows, can actually scare off bigger birds. Hopefully, your feeders will remain safe places from predators.

References

- John V. Dennis. "Predators." *A Complete Guide to Bird Feeding*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994. Pages 72-76.
- George H. Harrison. "Predators Have Their Needs, Too." *The Backyard Bird Watcher*. New York: A Fireside Book, 1979.

Enter the Ardent Timberdoodle

By Robert Mulvihill

If nature is a stage, with spring the opening night, then the embodiment of the "show must go on" philosophy is indubitably the ardent American Woodcock. As a warm-blooded (arguably hot-blooded) animal he is neither muted nor dissuaded by winter's last ditch efforts. He is the exuberance and ardor of spring, spiraling us out of winter on his twittering wings.

He may share Cyrano's disproportion, but he is similarly compensated with irresistible powers of romantic persuasion, wooing his ladies in the flattering lights of dusk and dawn. This bird is no stick in the mud when it comes to affairs of the heart, only when it comes to worm hunting. Having loosened his wings in the south, he is more

than ready for earnest courtship upon his return to Pennsylvania in late February. And he may continue to woo his ladies fair for several weeks, throughout March and even into April.

For a woodcock it would seem that mud is an irresistible aphrodisiac. Old fields, wet meadows, and damp thickets, any combination of cover for nesting, damp worm rich earth, and an open courtship arena, can entice a timberdoodle to hang his shingle and stay awhile. Visit such a spot in the blurring light of dusk as Song Sparrows and cardinals yawn their last songs of the day before settling in for the night, as robins sing their soothing lullabies and peepers usher in the night, and the woodcock will introduce himself with a shrug of his shoulders, a toss of his head, and a nasal "Meeeee!" Try holding your nose when you say it, and you will have a fair imitation. Maneuver yourself closer to a calling male, and you will discern a soft guttural note given immediately before each "Meeeee!," as it catches its breath.

After a number of preliminary proclamations, and when the fading light is just right, the woodcock launches himself on twittering wings, taking a spiral path to the limit of the naked eye, where he pours forth a bubbling song while winding his course earthward. At first, his song falls in pieces to your ears, but as it draws closer, his message is clear: "I'm a TIM-ber-doo-dle, I'm a TIM-ber-doo-dle, I'm a TIM-ber-doo-dle!," he boasts on his downward spiral. Breaking and braking abruptly, mid-spiral and mid-song, he falls leaf-like down on stiffened wings, fluttering the last few feet to a careful landing not far from where he launched. A quick catching of his breath, and he reiterates, "Meeeee!" to any ladies watching who might wonder who should be credited with so impressive a display.

Interested ladies will come and go, promiscuous male woodcocks won't be tied down. The females will quickly retreat to the nearby thickets and woods to create leafy nests on the ground to lay their clutches of 4-5 eggs, but the males will court long into the season with only full darkness and light calming his impassioned heart. Appropriately enough for a true romantic, the full moon may inspire nightlong ardor.

On the stage of nature, in the show of spring, the American Woodcock is an irrepressible and lovable ham. Catch his performance soon—you can't beat the price of admission. And remember, you are invited to attend any of three scheduled 3RBC Woodcock Walks this spring (see Spring Outings, p. 3).

[Article based on the author's *Naturally* column that originally appeared in *The Ligonier Echo*, April 11, 1984]



THE MALE AMERICAN WOODCOCK'S DISPLAY IS A YEARLY DELIGHT. WHAT BETTER WAY TO CAP OFF YOUR YOUR DAY THAN TO TRY AND CATCH HIS SPRINGTIME SHOW? PHOTO BY STEVE GOSSER.

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Birds in the Three Rivers Area

October – November 2025

By Mike Fialkovich, Bird Reports Editor

There was little rain in early October, but it was a bit cooler yet still above normal. By mid-October the temperatures cooled to more seasonable temperatures and sunny skies. The fall warbler migration was good with observers enjoying a variety of birds, but there were not any big days. Red-breasted Nuthatches were numerous in September, but by early October most seemed to move through.

Two immature white morph **Snow Geese** were at the mouth of Flaugherty Run near Dashields Dam 11/30 (AP). **Tundra Swan** reports include two in West Deer Twp. 11/11 (LC), six at Dashields Dam 11/12 (MV), a flock flying over Sewickley Heights Park 11/16 (WB), an immature at Duck Hollow 11/16-30 (MKu, VS, et al.), 33 over Gibsonia 11/16 (KP), a flock flying over Squirrel Hill 11/28 (MVV), two flocks of 20 and 15 flying over Franklin Park 11/28 (OM) and one at Oakmont 11/30 (DM).

Three **Northern Shovelers** were at North Park 11/1 (RH, SS, et al.). **Gadwall** was reported most of November. The first report was a single bird at Highland Park 10/29 (JDz, et al.). Two were on the Ohio River near Wood's Run 11/3 (JC, DBE), one at the Gulf Lab Wetland in Harmar Twp 11/10 (AH, PM) and two there 11/22 (EM). Two were on the Ohio River at Dashields Dam 11/14 (MV), three on the Allegheny River at Cheswick and two on the Monongahela River at Bunola 11/15 (JF). **American Wigeon** reports include three flying past Oakmont 11/7 (DM), three nearby at the Gulf Wetland in Harmar Twp. the following day (AP, et al.) which might have been the same birds. One was at the PennDot Wetlands in Upper St.Clair 11/27-29 (ST). A female **Northern Pintail** was at Janoski's Farm 11/10-23 (MV, m.ob.). She was joined by another female 11/24-26 (EPH). A **Surf Scoter** was at Aspinwall 11/21 (JDz), and a female plumaged **Black Scoter** was at Duck Hollow 11/7-9 (EH, m.ob.). A **Ruddy Duck** was at Dashields Dam 11/15 (DNe, CT), seven were at Duck Hollow 11/20 (NA), and two were at IMP 11/22 (AF).

A **Northern Bobwhite** was at Boyce-Mayview Park 10/14 (GG). As always these sightings are released birds. A **Horned Grebe** photographed at the Highland Park Reservoir 10/16 (LB) was quite early. A nice count of 119 **Mourning Doves** were at Janoski's Farm in Findlay Twp. 11/21 (MV).

A late **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** visited a feeder in Squirrel Hill 11/15-26 (EW). A female **Rufous Hummingbird** visited a feeder in Oakmont from 11/2 through the end of November (RBu).

Up to two **Virginia Rails** remained at Wingfield Pines through November (m.ob.). Typically rails migrate out of Pennsylvania by this time. South Park seems to be a gathering spot for **Killdeer** late in the fall. Up to 38 were there 11/23-30 (JT, MM). A **Dunlin** was at Imperial 11/21 (MV, AF).

American Woodcock is rarely reported in fall. One was at Beechwood Farms 10/6 (SD, JDz, TC). One was flushed at Hays Woods 10/28 (AG), one was at the upper fields in North Park 11/12 and 11/30 (KE). This area hosts displays by this species in spring. Up to three **Wilson's Snipe** were at North Park 10/25-11/23 (m.ob.). A late **Spotted Sandpiper** was at Bunola in the southern part of the county 10/16 (JF). **Solitary Sandpipers** were widely reported during the fall migration.

An out of season **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was at Chapel Harbor on the Allegheny River 10/2 (DBE). The bird was well photographed and was a juvenile/first winter bird. Perhaps they are around more than we think but overlooked due to the difficult identification of this species at this age. No terns were reported this

fall.

A **Green Heron** at Flaugherty Run 10/29 was on the late side (MV). Four **Black Vultures** were at Beechwood Farms 10/20 (DM), one was feeding on a dead raccoon at Brownhill Road and Saxonburg Blvd intersection in Fox Chapel 10/27 (JC), four were at Greensburg Pike and Braddock Road intersection in Churchill 10/28 (EH) and two were at Beechwood Farms 10/31 (DG).

Northern Saw-whet Owls were banded at three locations this fall, but in much lower numbers than last fall. The single evening high count that I'm aware of was seven at Harrison Hills Park 10/28.

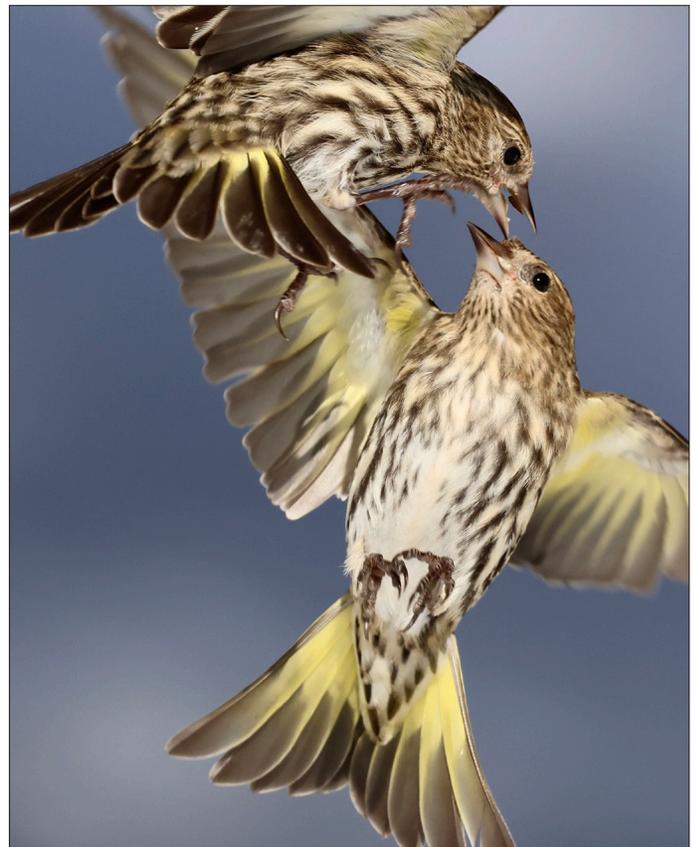
The **Red-headed Woodpeckers** at North Park continued through the period. The birds at Highland Park disappeared, unfortunately, due to removal of several dead trees in the vicinity of their nest (Amanda Haney pers. comm.). I am not certain the nest tree was removed, but I suspect it was.

There were numerous reports of **Merlin** in October and November from various locations likely representing migrants and birds arriving for the winter.

A late **White-eyed Vireo** was at Frick Park 11/1 (MK). Interestingly a very late bird was photographed in Westmoreland County in early December.

Red-breasted Nuthatches continued from September in many locations. A late **Northern House Wren** was photographed at Boyce-Mayview Park 11/2 (KH). Up to two **Marsh Wrens** continued through October at Wingfield Pines and last reported 11/2 (m.ob.).

American Pipit is a regular migrant in small numbers. One was at Hilltop Park in Collier Twp. 10/17 (JSa). One was heard flying over Duck Hollow 11/18 (MF), two were at Aspinwall Riverfront Park 11/20 (DM) and one was there 11/24 (AF). The open grassy area in this newly expanded park along the Allegheny River has been reliable



PINE SISKINS ARE ALWAYS ENTERTAINING WHEN THEY SHOW UP IN OUR AREA. PHOTO: DAN MENDENHALL.

The Peregrine

Birds in the Three Rivers

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for finding this species in recent years. Another one was at Duck Hollow 11/29 (JFe).

Hot on the heels of the Winter Finch Forecast, a few **Pine Siskins** were reported in the county this fall. Single birds were at Dead Man's Hollow 10/9 (KB), Frick Park 10/12 (CM), Homewood Cemetery 10/16 (MK), Hampton Twp. 10/24 (DN) and Beechwood Farms 10/26 (DM, et al.). Two were at North Park 10/10 (SG). Two were at Imperial 11/12 (DBe), one was at Chapel Harbor 11/16 (MKu) and one was at Beechwood Farms 11/19 (JL). Unfortunately, it appears they were just passing through the area.

A **Clay-colored Sparrow** was a great find at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve 10/6 (DM, m.ob.). The bird was well documented and seen by many observers but could not be relocated the following day. A **Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow** was at West Deer Twp. 10/19-28 (LC). The last report in eBird is 11/8, but this subspecies has wintered at this site in recent years so it may appear in the next report. **Vesper Sparrow** is rarely reported away from Imperial, so two observations were notable. One was at Allegheny Memorial Park Cemetery in Allison Park 10/1 (NB), and one was photographed at North Park 10/25 (EM).

A few **Rusty Blackbirds** were reported this fall. Single birds were at Duck Hollow 10/13 (Corvus) and Wingfield Pines 10/14 (APe), and two were there 10/15-11/13 (Corvus, m.ob.) One was at North Park 11/2 (eBird), one at Hartwood Acres 11/4 (JDz) and three were at Janoski's Farm in Findlay Twp. 11/21 (MV).

A somewhat late **Northern Waterthrush** continued at Chapel Harbor from 9/29 on 10/1 (JDz). An **Orange-crowned Warbler** was at Beechwood Farms 10/12 (JDz) and again 10/25 (SD). One was at Frick Park 11/1 (TR). A **Nashville Warbler** in Squirrel Hill 10/20 (AD, WZ) was late. The last (and third) **Connecticut Warbler** reported was at North Park 10/1 (KE). A **Mourning Warbler** was at Homewood Cemetery 10/1 (MK), and one was at Boyce Park 10/13 (EH) which was late. A **Common Yellowthroat** at Homewood Cemetery 10/26 (MK) was on the late side. A very late **Yellow Warbler** was photographed at Frick Park 10/24 (BL).

A very late male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was photographed at a feeder in West View 11/11 (DBI).

Observers: *Ken Behrens, Douglas Bell (DBI), David Bennett (DBe), Wilson Biggs, Nathaniel Bowler, Liz Buchanan, Ron Burkert (RBu), Thomas Connor, Jeannette Cordell, Corvus, Linda Croskey, Sofia D., Ankur Dave, John Dzikie (JDz), Kevin Evilsizor, Joe Fedor (JFe), Adrian Fenton, Mike Fialkovich, John Flannagan, Ross Gallardy, Andy Georgeson, Steve Gosser, Eric Hall, Amy Henrici, Karen Himmler, Rob Hooton, Michelle Kienholtz, Malcolm Kurtz (MKu), Bryon Langerman, Judy Lesso, Ed McKaveney, Pat McShea, Michele Mannella, Dan Mendenhall, Cole Miller, Oscar Miller, Dean Newhouse (DNe), Dick Nugent, Elizabeth Pagel-Hogan, Kevin Parsons, Amber Pertz, Tessa Rhinehart, James Saracco (JSa), Scott Sisco, Victoria Streeton, Shannon Thompson, Connor Tompkins, Joe Triglia, Mark VanderVen (MVV), Mark Vass, Ezra White, Wenting Zheng, m.ob (many observers).*



Rare Bird in Butler County

Story and photos by Jake Dingel, Photographer, Pennsylvania Game Commission

On Friday, January 30, I was on State Gamelands 95 in Butler County along Swope Road in an area with a variety of crabapples growing along a fence row. I had been to this spot several times before looking for photo opportunities of the various birds, such as robins, waxwings, cardinals, chickadees, White-throated Sparrows, and Hermit Thrush that I have often seen feeding on the abundant crabapples there.

On this visit, I caught a glimpse of a bird that looked different than the American Robins that were feeding at the same time. It took several minutes until I relocated it and got a better look at it along with a few photos. I thought it was a Varied Thrush, and I confirmed the ID with iBIRD Pro.

Later that day I shared my discovery with Bob Mulvihill, and he recommended that I submit my observation on eBird, so I posted it there with the general location of Gamelands 95 (Glades Lake). Bob then messaged me to ask if I could provide a more exact location, but before I could respond to Bob with a specific location, other birders had already found the bird on Saturday morning. As far as I know, the last time the bird was seen was in the morning on February 14th. I went back to get my own photos of the thrush on February 1st and the 8th. Both times there was a steady flow of birders stopping to get a look at this handsome visitor from the West.

