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The Newsletter of the Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society

From the President

Being outdoors when the weather is unpleasant can seem nonsensical. Staying inside allows modern comforts to be enjoyed; but not everyone has this luxury. The hawkwatchers at the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch need to collect data and are obligated to put up with Mother Nature's bad days. There is, however, a payoff.

Life in the wild goes on, regardless of the conditions, and those that venture into it increase their odds of a once in a lifetime encounter. Such an event occurred on a cold, windy, sleet-filled day in November. In order to escape the relentless west wind on my day of counting, I stood on the lower platform over the hillside at the hawk watch. A few sun rays broke through the dense dark clouds over the valley, compelling me to continue watching for raptors.

Frozen and cursing the weather, I noticed movement directly below me. It was a bobcat! Due to the weather, the camera lens was covered. Could I reach down, uncover the lens, pull the camera up, and snap a shot without the bobcat running. What are the odds, I thought? As you can see below, I got the shot! And that is the point...by getting out there, we increase our chances for a memorable day.



A bobcat walked across the hill at the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch.

Throughout this issue, there are other memorable events. Are you part of them? If not, I encourage you to get out and be part of the unforgettable future.

Brian M. Wargo

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Social Media at the Front!

By Jeanine Ging

Many people have a love/hate relationship with social media. We are hoping that you love, or at least like the social media for the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch. Our **Twitter** feed posts on the website and is updated for events, especially postings about owl banding. However, our **Facebook** page probably gives the most up to date information.

Since we can update in real time from the Allegheny Front, postings are made concerning weather, bird activity, and the fun we are enjoying! Weekends are when you can expect the most posts and photos. We try to comment early in the day to let you know conditions and expectations for flights. There is also a section where visitors can comment and add photos.

Users can also ask questions using **Messenger** and we usually answer immediately or at least in the same day. Our average post on Facebook reaches several hundred followers and some posts, such as the bobcat sighting, have reached as many as 14,000 viewers. When used properly social media is a great, free way to share information, photos, and updates. Follow us on Facebook and Tweet us on the Twitter feed.

twitter: APAS audubon@apasnews

Facebook: Allegheny Front Hawk Watch

Meadow of Wildflowers!

By Debbie Bodenschatz

The meadow at the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch is finally taking shape. On the day of this picture, there was an east wind and light rain, so of course there was fog.

Everything blooming now is perennial - hooray! We will continue maintenance of the meadow to keep it moving in this direction.

The patch of brown-eyed Susan plants (from Barb & Joe Carrier) that were planted a couple of weeks ago are doing wonderfully.

The meadow itself is worth the trip to the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch.



Debbie B.

The meadow at the hawkwatch is producing beautiful wildflowers!

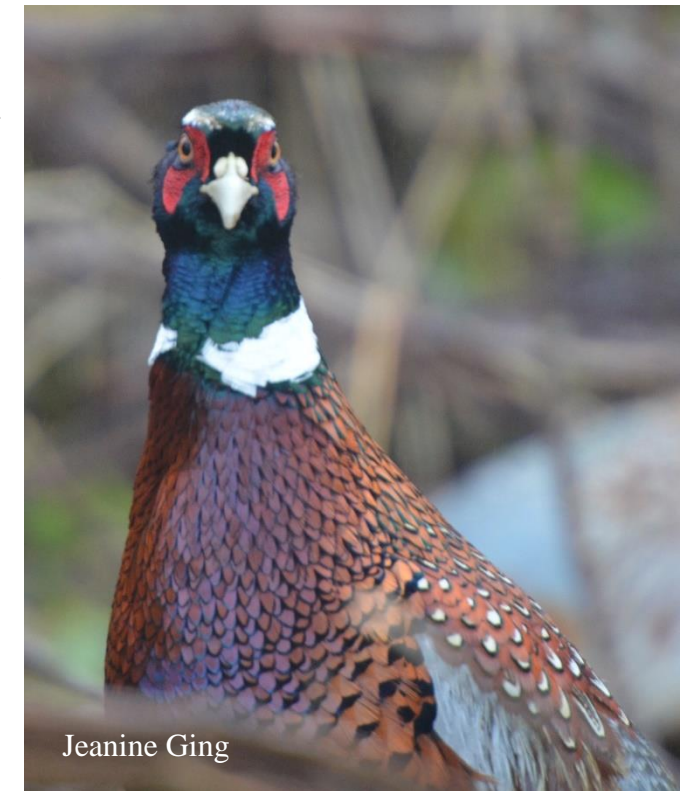
2018 A.P.A.S. Christmas Bird Count

By Jeff Payne

The 2018 Christmas Bird Count was a fun-filled and successful day with 27 participants, who identified 68 species on the day, with eight more identified during the count week. The weather was more cooperative than past years and most water was open, attracting late migrating waterfowl.

Highlights included finding a lone Greater White-fronted Goose with many Canadas, a large flyover flock of Snow Geese, a surprise wintering pair of Trumpeter Swans, and a White-winged Scoter. A late migrant for the count week was a Peregrine Falcon at Somerset Lake. Another nice surprise while looking for Short-eared Owls at Flight 93 was a Northern Shrike.

This is always a fun day which has a long history with APAS. Any new people wishing to participate should contact me at paynemt@gmail.com.



Jeanine Ging

Right: A close view of a Pheasant at the CBC.



Jeanine Ging

Above: The Christmas Bird Count always ends with a dinner and a tally of the bird numbers.

Record Spring Golden Eagle Count

By Tom Kuehl

Hawk Watchers live for epic flights of migrating raptors, thus providing those special, long-lasting memories. March 14, 2019 was such a day at the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch. Predicting epic flights is never a science, however when it's the peak time for migration and the winds are favorable, GO TO THE HAWK WATCH!

For spring Golden Eagle migration, a second day of east winds is likely to push raptors onto Pennsylvania's western-most ridge. At the Allegheny Front, a quiet morning turned into a very busy afternoon as strong east winds and a warming sun provided for ideal conditions.

For the 2019 spring season, March came in like a lion with almost two feet of snow and ice socking in the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch. Kudos to Compiler Bob Stewart for getting the watch re-opened. There was no significant snow in the prior week, but the overnight cold provided for a crusty morning walk to the northern end of the watch site, where observers position themselves for the spring flight.

Parking spots were still at a premium, and so an ambitious Ed Gowarty Sr. decided to dig himself a new spot during the morning lull.

So often the case in the spring, there is little to no reward for an early arrival. But today, there was just a little reward when an adult Golden Eagle floated low over the site at 10:15 a.m.

Shortly thereafter, perhaps the same Golden Eagle rushed past us to the south – I hoped that it was in hot pursuit of a Ground Hog ready to peak from its hole to see if winter was over. Alas, it was to be the only bird of the morning. Hey...no wind, no sun and, as of yet, not even any vultures up and about – just another spring day at the Allegheny Front.



Red-shouldered Hawk flies above Allegheny Front Hawk Watch.
Photo by Dave Poder.

It remained cloudy for the next three hours, however a strong wind got the flight started. Surprising for the Allegheny Front, the day before had provided for a good flight of 11 Red-shouldered Hawks; and another good showing today with a tally of 16. The adults were stunning in the blue sky and a juvenile thrilled us with a close pass just over our heads. And the Cooper's Hawks added to the mix with the day's total of 18; with several seen doing the harrier-like display flight as they passed below us in the valley.

Still cloudy through the 1 to 2 o'clock hour, the wind started to pick up. Counter Dave Poder closed out the 2 o'clock hour with the day's migrating raptor tally at 63; however, with just one Golden Eagle, I was left to wonder if, despite a favorable south east wind, would this day just be a bust? Fortunately, that was not the case.

The skies continued to clear, and the wind got stronger. The 2:35 p.m. Golden Eagle broke the eagle-jam and then no break in the action for Counter Dave for the rest of the day. The 2-3 p.m. total was 5 Golden Eagles, then 11 for 3-4 p.m. and a remarkable 22 for 4-5 pm, which included a kettle of 7, with 5 above (see the Dave Kipp's photo below) and 2 below; and another Goldie trailing that group. This is eight Golden Eagles in-sight at the same time!



Dave Kipp captures a kettle of Golden Eagles above Allegheny Front Hawk Watch.

Dave Kipp, working to drain his third camera battery of the day, snapped merrily as the many late afternoon raptors passed by the moon in the eastern sky. Another 14 Golden Eagles from 5-6 p.m. as the flight continued at a torrid pace until dying out suddenly at 6 p.m. There was only one more migrant for the day, a long-tailed raptor (that could have been a Northern Harrier or a Cooper's hawk) that streaked through the low blinding sun to the west.

Record Spring Golden Eagle Count Continued...

The full flight summary can be seen at Hawkcount.org, but here is an amended summary:

Eleven migrating species today including a distant single Osprey out over the valley and excluding one Peregrine Falcon that powered north parallel to the escarpment shortly after 3 p.m. Today's total tally was 267 and the Golden Eagle number was 53. Per Compiler Bob Stewart's research, the tally of 267 was a new record non- Broad-winged Hawk day for the spring, surpassing the tally of 231 recorded by counters Gene and Nancy Flament on March 15, 2003.

The 53 Golden Eagle tally is a new spring record, besting the 51 on March 13, 2015 recorded by Counter Ed Gowarty Sr., and ranks as the fourth highest count of Golden Eagles for both Spring and Fall. (See the Top Ten Table below). With the warming temperatures and calls of gulls, the day felt like a summer day at the beach, and we certainly are all grateful to have experienced this flight and appreciate the conservation work that made it possible.

Top Ten Golden Eagle Days at Allegheny Front

Compiled by Bob Stewart - Compiler

#GE	Date	Counter
74	Oct 25 2015	Deb Bodenschatz
66	Oct 26 2018	Bob Stewart, Ed Gowarty, Jr.
61	Nov 1 2011	Jim Rocco
53	Mar 14 2019	Dave Poder
51	Nov 23 2003	Mark McConaughy
51	Mar 13 2015	Ed Gowarty Sr
50	Nov 15 2017	Rosemary McGlynn
45	Nov 14 2005	Dick Byers
43	Nov 4 2013	Deb Bodenschatz
42	Nov 30 2013	Deb Bodenschatz



A classic Dave Poder picture, in that it looks like it was photoshopped...but it isn't. Dave is just a one of a kind photographer. This Golden Eagle going through the Moon is just one of the many wonderful views from that marvelous spring day. Photo by Dave Poder.

A.P.A.S. Outreach with Inclined-to-Read

By Jeanine Ging

As Raptorthon was occurring at the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch, I spoke with the Inclined-to-Read group at the Johnstown library on April 13, 2019. The group of mainly older adults were enthusiastic participants. They viewed a slide show featuring events at the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch and the Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society (A.P.A.S.).

Many questions were asked and answered, and the meeting ended with at least one participant signing up as a new member to A.P.A.S.

If other groups would like to learn more about what we do, have them contact us and we will try to accommodate them.

Somerset Lake Update

By Jeff Payne

The bid process is taking place to find a contractor to start repairs on the dam by late summer at Somerset Lake. The word is that the dam is to be finished and the lake refilled by 2021. Meanwhile, work continues on Somerset Lake Nature Park with a building permit imminent for the first picnic pavilion and clearing being done for a trail piece on the west side of the lake.

We are still awaiting word from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission on the feasibility of them allowing a cooperative fish/bird habitat project at the north end of the lake. The idea is to build an island and some shallow, submerged peninsulas that could be exposed as mud with a modest lake drawdown. If timed appropriately with shorebird migration in summer/fall it will reliably attract many shorebirds for a refueling stop where they can be enjoyed by birders.

The mud this spring attracted many birds including over 40 Semipalmated Plovers and over 70 combination Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers on one day. There have been 32 species of shorebirds recorded at the lake since 2012 when drawdowns started, making it one of the better and easiest spots to see this group of birds in PA.

If approval is given, we will need help from the birding community in raising some more grant match funds to get the project on the ground.

Adam Katrancha - Spreading Forest Stewardship

Information by Adam Katrancha - Summarized by Brian M. Wargo

The Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society's Adam Katrancha, a Pennsylvania Forest Steward with extensive experience completing forest enhancement and revitalization projects, recently visited the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown (UPJ) at the request of biology instructor Dr. Christine Dahlin to make a presentation on sustainable forestry to faculty, staff and students.

With 495 acres of forestland, UPJ has recently applied for certification under the Audubon International Cooperative Sanctuary Program and is currently working with a consulting forester to develop a forest stewardship plan for the campus. These progressive, long-term plans provide a sustainable approach to the management of the campus' natural resources.



*Adam with his trusty companion Annie, surveying the grounds in Pennsylvania.
Photo by Dave Poder*

Adam provided a case study of sustainable forest management of woodlands located at the headwaters of the Conemaugh River, including examples of best management practices, the challenges that can be expected, along with the tangible results that follow practice implementation.

The Center for Private Forests at Penn State provides free training to interested individuals through their Forest Stewardship Training Program. If interested, contact Adam!

A.P.A.S. Attends Forest Landowners Conference

by Brian M. Wargo

Several members of the Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society attended the 2019 Forest Landowners Conference in State College, Pennsylvania on the third Friday and Saturday in March. The conference was a perfect blend of professionals, academicians, land owners, and lay people who are all concerned about Pennsylvania's forests.

Private owners constitute the majority of ownership of the forests in Pennsylvania and their decisions have a major impact on the ecosystem. Thankfully, all of those in attendance try to be the best stewards possible. This is good news



Mike Jackson, Brian M. Wargo, Laura Jackson, and Bob Stewart had a great time at the Forest Landowners Conference.

for birds, which were mentioned in most of the presentations. The reason is simple—birds are indicators of the health and wellness of the ecosystem.

Presentation after presentation reaffirmed that our forests have been altered by human activity and now need help recovering. Plants, insects, birds, soil microbes, and humans are interconnected in a complex web that needs to be

understood to be managed. This requires that stakeholders have a voice, are supported, and use best practices to mitigate past decisions and to ensure those made today are sustainable.

While this may sound overwhelming or boring, the conference was inspiring, fun, and informative. Being held at the beautiful Penn Stater Hotel certainly helped everyone feel comfortable, with spacious presentation rooms, comfortable seating, and fantastic cuisine.

The A.P.A.S. fits well into this conference and our own Laura Jackson presented about *Planting for Pollinators* as well as giving a talk on *Attracting Birds to Your Back Yard*. Technically, Laura was not representing the A.P.A.S., but rather one of the other numerous organizations that she leads. But that is an important lesson...that the goals of the A.P.A.S. are interconnected with so many organizations. That is why the A.P.A.S. has been partnering with other organizations. Together, we can share resources, experiences, and expertise!



Above: Laura Jackson presents at the Forest Landowners Conference.

Left: The dessert table gives an idea of how good the food was at the conference!

Below: The 2019 Forest Landowners Conference Guide.

For those that missed the conference, get to the next one. Better yet, just join in the next A.P.A.S. outing. Some of the people at the conference will most likely be there, sharing their knowledge and looking to hear about your ideas!



Big Morongo Canyon Preserve

by Dave Poder

Located in Southern California, roughly halfway between Los Angeles and Arizona, Big Morongo Canyon (B.M.C.P.) has been an important geographical and ecological link between the high Mojave vegetation zone and the Sonoran zone. The desert oasis in the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve, with its verdant vegetation and riparian forest, is in great contrast to the rocky dirt landscape and the desert slopes that surround it.

Although Big Morongo Canyon Preserve and its 33,000 acres is in the desert, it is not sand and sand dunes as one might imagine. Instead, it is more of a moonscape with rocky slopes some of which have rock formations that are dated to be nearly two billion years old. It does have the desert climate however, and visitors are cautioned to be prepared for its heat.

The six trails of B.M.C.P. are rated from easy to strenuous. The easy Marsh Trail of .65 miles wanders



David Poder



David Poder

Vermilion Flycatcher (above) and Nuttall's Woodpecker (left) - Photos by Dave Poder.

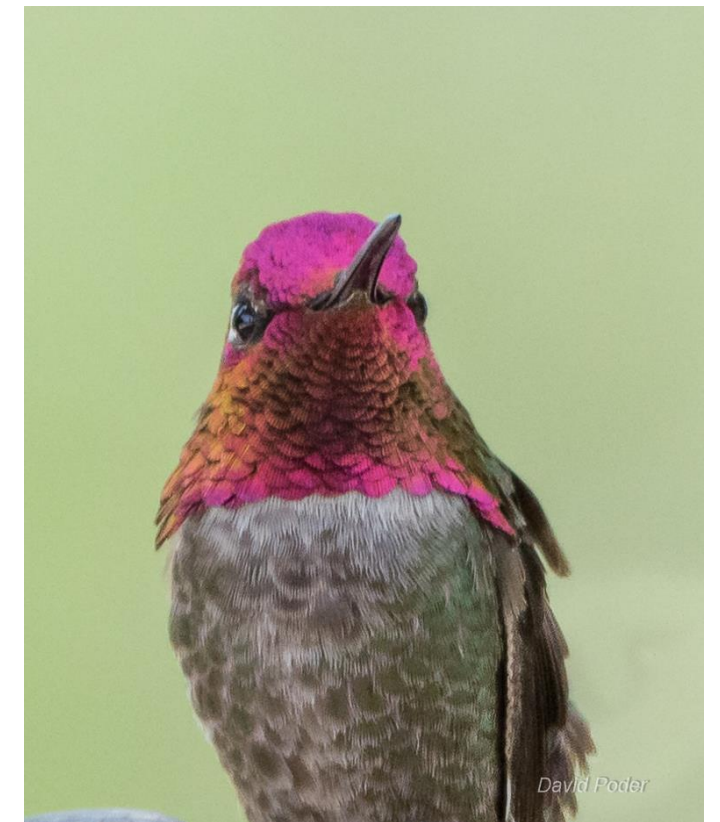
through the oasis and riparian forest and can afford sightings of many species of birds. I have seen many birds there, but my best birding has been on the Desert Willow and Yucca Ridge trails. In addition to some good birding, the Yucca Ridge Trail not only offers impressive views of the valley, oasis, and canyon, but also views of nearby snow-capped San Jacinto and San Gorgonio mountain peaks.

My three visits there have rewarded me with sightings of quite a few different bird species. Some examples are: Vermilion Flycatcher, Bell's Vireo, Black-headed Grosbeak, Hooded Oriole, Lazuli Bunting, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Western Tanager, Oak Titmouse, as well as Costa's, Anna's and Black-chinned Hummingbirds.

Big Morongo Canyon Preserve is an important wildlife corridor between the high and low deserts and offers a great deal to birders. My visits have been in the first week in May of the last three years, and each visit I see species that are new to me. I plan to return there next May in anticipation of adding more to my life bird list.



David Poder

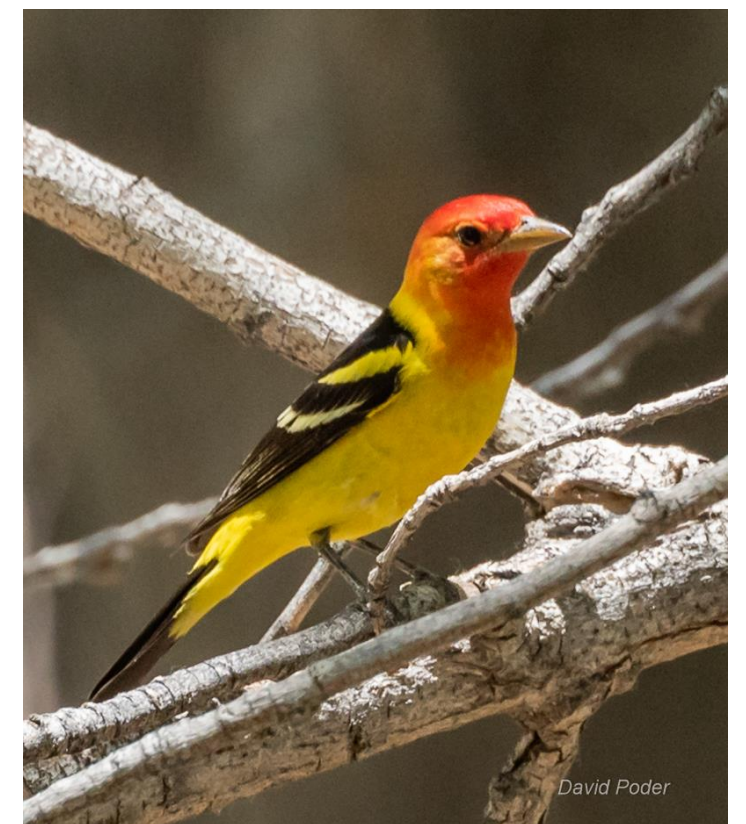


David Poder

Clockwise from top left: Lesser Goldfinch, Anna's Hummingbird, Western Tanager, Lazuli Bunting. All Photos by Dave Poder.



David Poder



David Poder

Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area Outing

by Bob Stewart

Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area is managed by the Pennsylvania Game Commission and lies along the Lebanon and Lancaster County line. The tract of land is set aside for protection, propagation, preservation, and controlled harvest of wildlife. There is a 400-acre lake and 70 acres of potholes, ponds, and dikes to create a marshy habitat for waterfowl. In addition, there are grain fields close by to provide food for the waterfowl.

On the day of our visit the website estimated 7500 Snow Geese, 600 Tundra Swans, and 2500 Canada Goose. New this year to the website is a live stream camera at Willow Point showing the waterfowl on the lake.



Snow Geese at the Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area. Photo by Dave Poder.

Dave Poder, Jim Rocco, and Bob Stewart met up with our outing leader, Wayne Sierer, and Wayne's brother Bill at Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area on February 22, 2019. Highlights of the outing included many species including Bald Eagles incubating on two separate nests, an incubating Red-tailed Hawk nest, a Great Blue Heron on a nest, and sightings of Red-headed Woodpeckers. Also seen were Ravens, Turkey Vultures, and American Kestrel. Duck species included: Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Pintail, Ring-necked Duck, American Black Duck, American Widgeon, Green-wing Teal, and Gadwall.

If you have never been to Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area, I would encourage you to set a day aside in late February or March and make a visit. Although I have not witnessed it myself, a grand sight is to witness the thousands of snow geese departing the lake near dawn for the food plots and returning near dusk to the lake.

Night Life at the Allegheny Front

by Jeanine Ging

In the fall when the hawk count ends for the day, the mist nets get raised and the speakers start blaring. The call of the Northern Saw-whet Owl screams through the woods. Dave Darney, the owl bander, has spent the last hour of daylight preparing the area to capture and band these predators of the night. As owls get caught in the nets, Dave gently removes them and takes them to the picnic table to process and band.

The owls are weighed, wings and beaks measured, sexed, and eye color recorded. A small band is placed on their ankle with identification numbers so that if they are recaptured their migration can be tracked. Dave has a gift of educating the observers about the Saw-whets and allows everyone to get photos, usually picking a special person to release the owl.

Jeanine Ging



The nights spent on the Allegheny Front banding owls can be long and freezing cold at times. Dave and his merry group of helpers sit in the cold joking, eating, and watching for shooting stars. The 2018 season was a slow one. Banding only occurred over 3 nights because of weather conditions.

Thirty-one Saw-whets were banded this season with 26 of those being captured on the night of November 3, 2019 into November 4, 2019. That night was very exciting with the group barely getting to sit because of the constant flow of owls. At times people were standing around holding bags with owls in them while others were checking nets because you could hear the owls calling from the woods.

To participate in a night with Dave and the owls, check Allegheny Front's Twitter feed and Facebook page for updates starting in October. Conditions can be bitter cold so bring plenty of warm layers and a chair. The gate is generally closed at night, so park out on the road and walk in. We set-up on the lane where we wait to do net checks about every 15 minutes. Hopefully this season will bring more owls and more memories.

Dave Darney prepares Clyde Williams to release a Saw-whet Owl.

Raptorthon 2019

by Brian M. Wargo

For the past three springs, the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch participated in Raptorthon, a citizen science awareness campaign that helps the public understand the importance of our ecosystem, using birds of prey as the vehicle. This is integral to Hawk Migration Association of North America's mission, which is, "To advance the scientific knowledge and promote conservation of raptor populations through study, enjoyment, and appreciation of raptor migration."

Essentially, participants search the skies for raptors, collecting money for each bird spotted. The Freedom Area High School's Naturalist Club participated in Raptorthon again this year, collecting money from students, teachers, and community members. The proceeds are split between HMANA and the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch.



Jeanine Ging

Ms. Linnea Homa, Ella Walden, Cole Skuse, Alex Kerr, Cade Skuse (hidden), Charlie White, and Brian M. Wargo scan the morning sky at the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch.

More importantly, Raptorthon is a good excuse for high school students to visit the hawkwatch. This year six students, chauffeured by one of Freedom's biology teacher visited the site on April 13, 2019. The school van arrived at the hawksite at 9:00 a.m. The students were warned about the cold weather at the Allegheny Front and they arrived bundled for a cold day. But the sun was bright and the temperature was warm.

The first bird of the day was a Broad-winged Hawk and the students were excited to see a bird low in the sky, just about eye level. The students each took turns taking the weather data and recording birds that passed the site. At noon, the students saw a Bald Eagle, something they felt was mandatory for a trip to the Allegheny Front.

As the day progressed, the hawks were higher and higher in the sky, giving the students difficulty at finding the birds, let alone identifying them. By the end of the day, the two small kettles of Broad-winged Hawks were nearly too much for the students' tired eyes.

Everyone loaded into the school van and the journey home began. But there was one more stop for the day...Somerset Lake, where the Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society was hosting a duck walk. Dr. Jeff Payne helped the students identify shorebirds in a tall grass section of the lake. Overhead, several Red-tailed Hawks and another Bald Eagle floated in the sky, taking the tally for the day to 81 raptors. A perfect way to end Raptorthon 2019.



BMW

Alex Kerr, Cole Skuse, Cade Skuse, Meadow Ging-Wargo (front-center) Phil Choflet, Charlie White, an older gentleman, Ella Walden.

This year, the Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society received a check for \$656.00 for the 2019 Raptorthon. (A big thanks to Jeanine Ging who helps organize the contributions at Freedom Area School District.)

Peter Livengood Receives Highest Honor

by Brian M. Wargo

Peter Livengood, one of Allegheny Front's hawk counters, is the recipient of the Boy Scouts of America's William T. Hornaday Silver Medal for Conservation, one of the most prestigious awards in the Boy Scouting program. Less than 150 Silver Medals have been awarded since the program was created in 1975, which equates to an average of three Silver Medals being given each year. For comparison, more than 55,000 youth achieve Eagle Scout annually.

Peter was required to make substantial contributions in at least four areas. Hawkwatching was one of those areas, where he conducted research on raptors on Chestnut Ridge in southwestern Pennsylvania. Doing so required founding the Summit Mountain Hawkwatch. The project required Peter to spend 388 volunteer hours collecting data, writing an analysis, and presenting it to qualified researchers.



David Whipkey

Bob Stewart administering the Eagle Scout oath to Peter Livengood.

The work that Peter completed was done before he graduated high school, making him one of the youngest ambassadors for hawkwatching. He has presented at Freedom Area High School's Third Annual Science Conference, at Strike a Spark Student Research Conference at California University of Pennsylvania, and along with his brother Calvin, even had an infomercial about undergraduate research opportunities professionally filmed, centering around raptor research. Please view the following —<https://youtu.be/cgwqvBFmbFA>—I promise you will be happy you did!

A.P.A.S. Members that Worked with Peter Livengood

by Brian M. Wargo

Upon hearing about the award, Peter Livengood wrote, "I am thankful for the many donors, volunteers, and natural resource professionals who contributed to these projects. I certainly could not have completed the projects without their help." He also thanked individual members of the A.P.A.S. for their assistance.

They include A.P.A.S. Vice President and Allegheny Front Hawk Watch compiler Bob Stewart who delivered Peter's Eagle Scout award, to veteran hawk counters at the Allegheny Front Che and Marion Mincone, who helped Peter count at Summit Mountain Hawkwatch and certify Peter's new hawk site, to A.P.A.S. board member Wayne Sierer, a hawkwatcher and lifelong birder who worked with Peter at the Wildlife Leadership Academy, to Debbie Bodenschatz, board member and Monday counter who worked with Peter, and to the countless others that Peter interacted with at the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch.

As for my relationship with Peter, it started at Cumberland Gap Hawkwatch, when Peter began counting hawks and sending me his reports. Soon, I was seeing him at the Allegheny Front and before long, I was reviewing his research. I would stand with Peter in the cold and Peter's attention was unwavering. Before I knew it, I was signing off that Peter had made a significant contribution to the Hawkwatching community.

Clearly there are other connections and mentors not mentioned here, but one thing is for sure, Peter has brought all of us together and made us proud to call him one of our own. Great Job Peter!



David Whipkey

Bob Stewart along with Che and Marion Mincone celebrate Peter's accomplishment.

The Biggest Week in American Birding

by Jeanine Ging

I birded the warbler capital of the world! I proudly wear a t-shirt with this statement on it. The Biggest Week in American Birding is a festival that takes place every year in early May near Toledo, Ohio. It is truly an experience!

This year was the tenth anniversary and Black Swamp Bird Observatory who organizes the event, pulled out all the stops. This ten-day event packs in bird related activities such as: field trips by bus and boat, lectures, workshops on photography and art, birding with the stars such as Kim and Kenn Kaufman, bird tattoo contests, and a birder's prom to name a few.



A.P.A.S. board member Ed Gowarty, Jr. was spotted on the Magee Marsh Boardwalk.

Many will tell you that this event is too crowded for their liking, but I will argue that being surrounded by folks who love birds is a problem I do not mind. There are so many events and sights to explore that you can spread out your bird viewing.

The boardwalk at Magee Marsh is the focal point of the festival. Guides and bird lovers from around the world stroll the boardwalk sharing bird views and experiences. Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge offers free tram rides with a guide and access to the entire refuge by foot. There are lots of water fowl and eagle nests on the refuge to spy.

Maumee Bay State Park offers another boardwalk where you can always find owls. The lodge at Maumee Bay is where keynote speakers, evening socials, and the birder's marketplace occur daily. The festival lists about 20 bird viewing areas all within about a half-hour of each other.

Our family has been attending this event for the past eight years and we haven't come close to seeing all the areas that are active during the event. My favorite part of the event is the Canon booth free-loaner program. A driver's license will get you access to cameras most of us cannot afford, but allow us to record all the fabulous birds for a day.

Next year, the festival runs from May 8-17, 2020. Mark your calendar now and take a few personal days to be a bird nerd. Look for us on the boardwalk. I'll be the one with the Canon loaner camera!



Randy Flament and Brian M. Wargo pose for a picture on the boardwalk.

Spring Raptor Migration Summary

by Bob Stewart, Compiler

The watch commenced on February 17th and continued through May 2nd. The site was manned for 345.75 hours. The season tally was 1348 migrants. This results in 3.90 raptors per hour. After a poor flight in 2018 all species with the exception of Broad-winged Hawks rebounded.

There was some difficulty accessing the hawk watch, with up to two feet of frozen, thawed, refrozen snow to remove and/or walk on (see photo to the right). This year was the most snow in memory on the viewing area, which usually has either light snow or no snow at all. Walking on the snow was challenging as the top was a crust from the fog and frozen rain accumulation.

Golden Eagles tallied 103, a sixteen-year high. The 42 Bald Eagles are the second highest spring total. April saw 30 Bald Eagles, a new record for April. A dramatic increase in Red-shouldered Hawks resulted in a season tally of 52. Also, 5 Peregrine Falcons migrated, a fourteen-year high.

Other species include 13 Black Vultures, 189 Turkey Vultures, 64 Ospreys, 17 Northern Harriers, 88 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 50 Cooper's Hawks, 3 Northern Goshawks, 52 Red-shouldered Hawks, 375 Broad-winged Hawks, 275 Red-tailed Hawks, 12 American Kestrels, 2 Merlins, 5 Peregrine Falcons, 5 unidentified accipiters, 18 unidentified buteos, 3 unidentified eagles, and 28 unidentified raptors.

Rosemary McGlynn was the counter on February 27, 2019. The weather was moderate, with winds out of the Southeast and haze in the valley. It was sunny to partly sunny in the afternoon. It was a cold start in the morning with the thermometer reading -6 degrees C. It warmed up to +1 degree C in the afternoon. A nice flight of eight Golden Eagles for the day. The only Rough-legged Hawk of the season, a dark phase, passed by shortly before noon. Also migrating were 4 Turkey Vultures, 1 Bald Eagle, 3 Red-shouldered Hawks, 6 Red-tailed Hawks, and 1 unknown buteo.

After the broad-winged hawk flight on April 17, 2019 and April 18, 2019, two days of rain followed. Then days of strong west wind. Finally, one good flight near the end of the month. April 29, 2019 had strong east-southeast winds. The counter was Peter Livengood. There were 44 migrants for the day. The count included 10 Bald Eagles, 1 Golden Eagle, and 21 Osprey, 1 Cooper's Hawk, 9 Broad-winged Hawks, 2 Red-tailed Hawks, and 1 late-day immature Golden Eagle. The special of the day was a Sandhill Crane which flew in from the east valley, circled low directly overhead and gave great looks! Also noted were 10 Double-crested Cormorants and 4 Common Loons.

The most rewarding day of the spring was March 14, 2019. This was a warm spring day with light winds out of the southeast. The counter was Dave Poder. The day produced a record spring count of Golden Eagles. For more details, refer to the article written by Tom Kuehl in this newsletter.

I wish to thank our crew of counters including Debbie Bodenschatz, Peter Livengood, Jim Rocco, Rosemary McGlynn, Dave Poder, Ed Gowarty Sr, Brian Wargo, and Bob Stewart.



Photo by Dave Poder

Ed Gowarty Cooks Fish at the Workday

by Brian M. Wargo

I always heard the stories of the old man that brought just a few Walleye and couple of Blue Gill to a workday and yet, fed many people. I was skeptical, for the story took place many years ago. But at this year's workday, I became a believer. Ed Gowarty fed the entire work group. I must say, it was outstanding! However, those that were not there, must simply believe, for not a single photo was taken of the event. But, trust me, it happened, and it was great!



Greg, Adam, and Bob bagging the invasive species.



Everyone anticipating Ed's Fish Fry!

Bird Walk at Beaverdale Sportsmen's Club

by Brian M. Wargo

The partnership between Beaverdale Sportsman's Club and the Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society continues to strengthen. As organizations struggle to hold membership numbers, it is in everyone's best interest to combine events. However, the logistical aspects of doing so are often daunting. Thankfully, there are individuals that push through and work to ensure that events come to fruition.



The group stops when two members hear what might be a Cerulean Warbler. It was never confirmed.

Adam Katrancha took the lead and organized another event at Beaverdale Sportsmen's Club, where Indiana University of Pennsylvania's Jeff Larkin (pictured in the light grey jacket above) led a bird walk/talk. Most of the attendees also had expertise, making the day one of pleasurable learning.

The day ended with a wonderful lunch and continued discussions about land management, bird habitat, and advocacy. Thank you Beaverdale Sportsmen's Club, and Adam in particular, for making this happen!



The above photos show the variety of habitat that Beaverdale Sportsmen's Club has engineered.

Adam Katrancha Gets Recognized by A.P.A.S. by Brian M. Wargo



Jeanine Ging

Adam is recognized at Beaverdale Sportsmen's Club by the A.P.A.S.

Adam Katrancha is a spark that keeps so many fires going. His relentless pursuit of environmental education and land management makes him an asset to many organizations. And, when there is work to be done, Adam is always there! The Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society board felt it appropriate to honor Adam for all of his hard work. He was presented with a Dave Poder Golden Eagle portrait as a token of our appreciation.

Thank you, Adam, for all you have done and will continue to do!

Outings, Meetings, and Events

As with all outings, presentations, walks, meetings, talks, etc., always check the APAS website for updates or cancelations before leaving home at www.alleghenyplateauaudubon.org.

July 14, 2019 – N.A.B.A. Butterfly Count - Just like hawk counting, except with butterflies! If you are interested in participating, please contact Deb Bodenschatz at deb4nba@gmail.com.

Moth Lighting - Summer 2019 - Rarely seen moths, butterflies, and flying insects are active at night and are attracted to UV lamps. Join us for a night of adventure. Dates and locations will be announced on the website news feed.

July 27, 2019 – Kittatinny Roundtable - Regional hawkwatchers meet at Hawk Mountain to discuss spring and fall counts. Registration (free) is required to determine the number of attendees.

August 4, 2019 – APAS Annual Meeting - Pavilion # 7 at Shawnee State Park. The meeting starts at 11:00 a.m. and will last one hour.

August 4, 2019 – APAS Summer Picnic - Pavilion # 7 at Shawnee State Park starts with food at noon. Fried chicken will be provided. Please bring a covered dish to share and your own beverages (non-alcoholic). You may also bring one or two items for the trash-to-treasures silent auction.

August 10, 2019 - Workday at the hawkwatch. Details will be forthcoming.

August 10, 2019 – Astronomy night at the hawkwatch. Bring your binoculars, spotting scope, or telescope to the hawkwatch for a night of sky watching. Wayne Sierer will lead the event, but everyone is welcome to share their expertise.

August 15, 2019 – Fall Hawkwatching Begins- The hawkwatch opens for regular counting.

September 1, 2019 – Membership Dues - The Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society relies on memberships, donations, and volunteerism to remain a viable organization that conserves, educates, and spreads joy through encounters with nature. Please continue to support the APAS. Membership runs from September 1st through August 31st. If your membership has lapsed or you would like to join the APAS, please visit the membership tab on our website. Please also consider donating to the APAS. Visit the Donation tab on our website.

September 26, 2019 – A.P.A.S. Meeting at U.P.J. - A program discussing the invasive insect known as the Spotted Lantern Fly will be presented. The speaker is Thomas G. Ford a commercial horticulture educator from the Cambria County division of the Penn State Extension. Program begins at 7:00 p.m.

October 6, 2019 - Hawkwatch Picnic. Please bring a covered dish to share and your own beverages (non-alcoholic). Food served at noon.

October–November 2019 - Owl Banding – Please see the *Night Life at the Allegheny Front* article by Jeanine Ging in this newsletter. Also, check the social media sites for details.

October 17, 2019 – A.P.A.S. Meeting at U.P.J. - Members are asked to bring images to present to attendees. The subject does not need to be avian oriented. Please let Bob Stewart know ahead of time what storage device you will be using to facilitate viewing. Program begins at 7:00 p.m.