



The Peregrine

Three Rivers Birding Club Newsletter

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

Vol. 19, No. 4, July/August 2020



Our August Meeting Will Be Virtual; See April's Missed Program Online

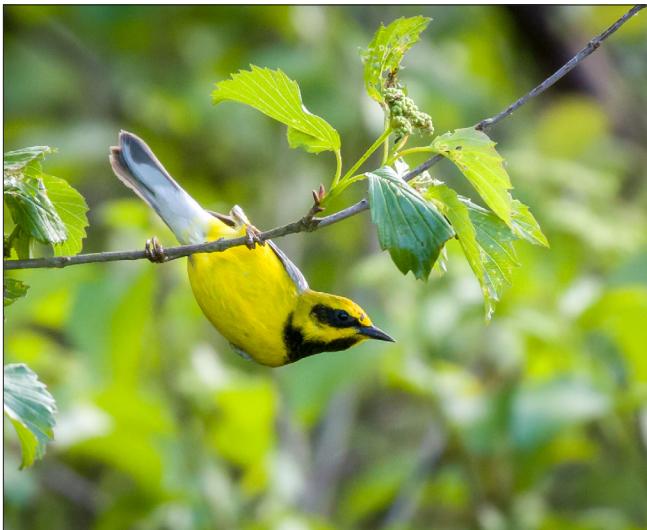
COVID-19 restrictions required us to cancel our in-person meetings. The August meeting will be our first “virtual” meeting featuring Tessa Rhinehart presenting the program she had scheduled for our April meeting, and we are working on a Zoom program featuring Tessa’s presentation online. Watch for details on the 3RBC website and our Facebook page.

If you haven’t already used Zoom, you can download the free app to your computer or mobile device at <https://zoom.us/download>. In the week preceding the meeting date, we will email members a link to the meeting. If you don’t use a computer or have only email, you can listen over a phone connection. Please contact our President Sheree Daugherty or Webmaster Tom Moeller for that phone number and meeting code.

Tessa’s program titled “Eavesdropping on Birds” describes a process created at the University of Pittsburgh, which uses computer-based “ears” to survey species on a scale that would be impossible for field birders to achieve. She is part of the Pitt research team that developed this new technology.

Tessa has achieved a significant milestone as the chief author of her first peer-reviewed article in a scientific journal. “Acoustic Localization of Terrestrial Wildlife: Current Practices and Future Opportunities” reviews worldwide research in the “eavesdropping” techniques. You can read it in the *Ecology and Evolution* journal at <https://tinyurl.com/Tessa-article>.

In the photo at left, Tessa stands in front of the Nevado del Ruiz volcano in Colombia while on a birding trip there.



EXCITING HYBRID – 3RBC member Amy Henrici discovered this rare hybrid of Golden-winged Warbler and Blue-winged Warbler at Deer Lakes Park in Allegheny County on May 16, 2020. Called “Lawrence’s Warbler,” it combines plumage features of the two species. Some of our club members were fortunate to see it until at least mid-June. Dave Brooke took these photos.

See *The Peregrine* in beautiful color at 3rbc.org

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President's Message

Good News for Bad Times: There's No Better Chance to Watch Birds' Behavior

By Sheree Daugherty

It's not all bad news, especially for birds and birding. We find ourselves coping with one of the worst pandemics in history. It's easy to be obsessed with the negatives, and it is a very ominous situation, but there are some glimmers of hope for the pastime that we love.

Fortunately, birds have not been affected by the virus and continue to go about their daily routines as if nothing has changed. Migration, breeding, and nesting go on as usual. In fact, there may be many benefits for birds, including fewer vehicles on the road, cleaner air, and fewer disruptions caused by people. If we humans want a break from our home confinement, it is safer to be outside than in an office or store. Getting outdoors and birding can be a respite from our stay-at-home blues. Still, it is important to follow safety guidelines to avoid crowds and wear a mask when necessary.

A recent Associated Press article gives a very positive insight into how the pandemic has changed habits and slowed down our daily routine. Conner Brown, a young Stanford University law student, spent time during the early days of the pandemic searching for characters in the Pokemon Go mobile phone game. While playing the game, he started to notice birds. Soon he bought binoculars, downloaded birding apps, and now gives birding advice on Twitter. "The world of birds is so much more vibrant and active than I'd ever realized, and once I paid attention, it just hit me in the face," Brown said. "It's given me a reason to get out of the house. It's motivated me."

Conner Brown's experience is being repeated all over the country, and interest in birding is soaring.

- Demand for many items has fallen but sales of bird feeders, nesting boxes, and birdseed is growing as people look for ways to entertain themselves at home.
- Downloads of the National Audubon Society's bird identification app doubled in March and April compared to the same period last year.
- Downloads of Cornell Lab's free bird identification app, Merlin ID, rose by more than 100% with over 8,500 downloads during Easter weekend.
- Visits to Cornell's live bird cams have doubled.
- Uploads of bird photos have increased by 45%, and recordings of calls have increased by 84% on eBird.
- Because we have been forced to stay closer to home, many of us are disappointed to miss the annual trip to Magee Marsh or more exotic birding destinations. But, on a positive note, many have discovered previously unexplored spots to bird in their own neighborhoods.

My own experience is typical. If it weren't for the stay-at-home order, I would never have stumbled across a nesting pair of Cooper's Hawks near the National Aviary on an early morning walk through Allegheny Commons on Pittsburgh's Northside. Once I knew they were there, checking on those hawks gave me a

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Send articles and/or illustrations to:

Paul Hess, Editor

phess@salsgiver.com

1412 Hawthorne St., Natrona Heights, PA 15065

Send ideas or items for the website to:

Tom Moeller, Webmaster

thosjmoel@gmail.com

Send questions and suggestions to:

Sheree Daugherty, President

shereedaugherty@gmail.com

522 Avery St., Pittsburgh, PA 15212

Suggest or volunteer to lead outings to:

Steve Thomas, Outings Director

thomassj22@verizon.net

309 Center Ave., Aspinwall, PA 15215

Report bird sightings to:

Mike Fialkovich, Bird Reports Editor

mpfial@verizon.net

805 Beulah Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15235

**Membership: FREE Student-Youth, \$15 Individual,
\$20 Family, \$50 Contributing, \$100 Sustaining**

Send check to Three Rivers Birding Club

c/o Thomas J. Moeller, Treasurer

6357 Ebdy St., Pittsburgh, PA 15217-3035

thosjmoel@gmail.com

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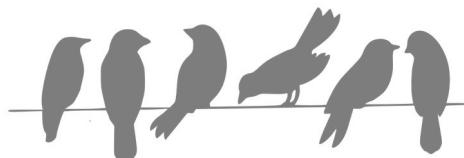
goal and got me outdoors on days when I could have easily stayed in bed for another hour.

This is also a good time to slow down and observe bird behaviors. Many people have told me about finding nests in their yards and how much enjoyment they get from observing the entire process from nest building to seeing the young fledglings take their first flight. These birds may have nested in their yards for years, but this year they are noticing the little dramas for the first time.

Let's be "glass half full" people and look for ways to lift our spirits while awaiting the day when we can resume life as usual.

(Editor's note: When researching for an article, I recently came upon a comment appropriate to Sheree's message. It was in a classic teacher's guide in 1911 titled Handbook of Nature Study by Anna B. Comstock:

"This is an age of nerve tension, and the relaxation which comes from the comforting companionship found in woods and fields is without doubt the best remedy for this condition."



Outings to Come

Watch the 3RBC Website for Fall Schedule News

By Steve Thomas, Outings Director

Until there is a better understanding of the requirements of group participation for our bird outings from the State Health Department and the CDC, the Fall outings will be not be scheduled until late July.

If we can safely reinstate club outings, they will be posted on the 3RBC website and in the September-October issue of *The Peregrine*. Check the website regularly for the newest information.

The safety of our members and participants will be paramount in our decision to schedule or cancel our outings.



UNUSUAL TANGER – Michelle Kienholz photographed this odd Scarlet Tanager at Frick Park on May 18, 2020. Bob Mulvihill, ornithologist at the National Aviary, explains that it is a second-year male called an “orange variant”—a color seldom seen. Bob estimates that fewer than 5% of all Scarlet Tanagers ever banded at Powdermill Nature Reserve had this orange plumage.

A Record-setting Day: 94 Species at Frick Park

By Aidan Place

The COVID-19 pandemic has cast a lot of our lives into flux. People have lost opportunities, livelihoods, loved ones, and their own lives. Very low down the totem pole of priorities in this time comes the ability of birders to bird freely, and yet it has been frustrating to see my birding radius largely contract down to my neighborhood.

With my field job cancelled, stealing away my summer of working in Wyoming’s gorgeous sagebrush steppe, I was feeling pretty demoralized and resolved myself to compensate by birding my local area with renewed vigor and by trying to have the very best spring I could at my local patch. As an Oakland resident, “local patch” for me means Frick Park – or more precisely – “greater Frick,” the vaulted amalgamation of Frick Park, the Homewood Cemetery, and Duck Hollow along the Monongahela River minted by past generations of birders in the area.

As migration heated up through April and early May, I was already having an excellent spring. Rising early every day to bird before my virtual lectures at Carnegie Mellon University, I had assembled a respectable list of highlights with scarce migrants like Northern Waterthrush, Prothonotary Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, and Golden-winged Warbler encountered more than once.

I had also attempted an essentially self-powered big day in late April, racking up 70+ species and 12+ miles of walking. However, in mid-May, subpar wind conditions had been holding up the next wave of migrants somewhere to our south.

Getting antsy for more birds, I was checking the radar religiously, and it became clear that the night of May 14-15 was going to be a stellar night for migration and possibly even The Big One. Around midnight on the 15th, lawn chair in hand, I went to the Carnegie Mellon football field where I plopped myself down to listen for the whispered calls of migrants passing overhead. That night, instead of the handful of notes I had heard during the past few evenings, I was treated to a full symphony as Scarlet Tanagers, Least Sandpipers, Cape May Warblers, Bobolinks, Swainson’s Thrushes, and more species pinked, zipped, and zeeted their way north. At just past 2:00 AM I got home and passed out for a couple hours, convinced the next day was going to be amazing.

Six o’clock rolled around quickly and I was in the park by 6:30. The Meadow Trail, which runs behind the Frick Environmental Center, had been particularly good for migrants this year, so I started there. At the environmental center I ran into Tessa Rhinehart, and we continued together toward the woods.

It was immediately apparent that this day was something special. Warbler song reverberated all around, and birds dripped from the trees. Scarlet Tanagers, hyped up on hormones and ready to breed, chased each other around, a Lincoln’s Sparrow flushed up from the grass before us, Swainson’s Thrushes and Northern Parulas seemed to be everywhere, my first Blackpoll Warbler of the year was sounding off, and one small sapling held no fewer than four Bay-breasted Warblers (a species which had been scarce just a few days prior). The beauty of migration was on full display.

Moving farther back along the trail, a Mourning Warbler popped up for a couple of moments along a fallen log, an excellent bird for Frick. The next few hours were spent in pure bliss, meandering around all the little trails behind the meadow and just soaking in the moment. It was a once-a-year kind of day, and I was in heaven. With midmorning approaching, I bid farewell to Tessa and made my way around the Clayton Trail and eventually

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A Record Setting

continued from page 3

down Falls Ravine which leads toward the bottom of the park and Nine Mile Run. At the bottom of Falls Ravine I hit another warbler jackpot and picked up a singing Cerulean and a nice male Golden-winged Warbler. Farther down the trail I encountered a Black-billed Cuckoo. Nine Mile Run brought in more good birds including two Green Herons, a Solitary Sandpiper, and a Willow Flycatcher singing away from a marsh.

My day list had grown significantly, and I noted with pleasure that I had broken the 80 mark. Unfortunately, the heat was growing too, and I completed my loop around Nine Mile Run and retreated back to my car—picking up a Canada Warbler on the way. I shot off a quick text to Frick Park legend Jack Solomon when I got home, saying that Frick was on fire and I had gotten 85 species over the course of the morning.

I then promptly took a nap. I woke up to a response from Jack indicating that 85 species was a record-breaking number for Frick in one day, beating the previous record of 84 set by Nathan and Eric Hall in the 1980s. Nice. Now with that record set, I couldn't resist putting in a few more hours during the afternoon and making a mini-big day of it.

Feeling confident that I had cleaned up the park nicely during the morning, I headed down to Duck Hollow, hoping to pick up some waterbirds. A storm was just beginning to roll in as I arrived to find six Common Terns feeding along the river -- another great find for the day and a lifer for me at that location! A few more river birds were ticked (as was the elusive Rock Pigeon which can be quite hard to find in Frick), and I headed up to the Frick Park Bowling Green where I met with Jack Chaillet to do some evening birding. Brown Thrasher, Cooper's Hawk, and a Northern Waterthrush were picked up before the last bird of the day, my first Common Nighthawk of the year, flew over peenting as the sun set. The final tally was 94 species: exactly 10 over the previous Frick record.

On the whole, it was an excellent day and probably the best I've ever had in Frick Park. There was a really high number of excellent species for the area around, and that combined with excellent migration produced the record. However, this is frankly just the tip of the iceberg for big days that are possible in Frick.

A day with great migration overnight that falls during the small window in mid-May when later migrants are arriving (Black-billed Cuckoo, Acadian Flycatcher, Blackpoll Warbler, etc), some earlier migrants are still possible (Yellow-rumped Warbler, Ruby-crowned Kinglet), and warbler numbers are still at a peak creates the perfect conditions for a large species list in the park.

Additionally, since I was not intending to do a big day, I missed a pretty large swath of species including fairly easy breeders such as Field Sparrow, Wood Duck, Yellow-throated Warbler, and Belted Kingfisher. A concerted effort on a similar day in future years should easily break the century mark without too much effort.

A big day to me is a great demonstration of the beauty of migration and a show of appreciation for the stunning city park we are blessed to have access to. I had a lot of fun with it this year and highly recommend that other East End birders pursue their own big days next year. After all, my record is primed and waiting to be broken!

How to Identify Confusing Female Warblers in Spring

By Charity Kheshgi

Last spring I got my first DSLR camera with a zoom lens, a Nikon D5600, and it changed my birding experience entirely. The extra weight besides my binoculars was worth it. I started seeing the variations between individual birds and noticing how many birds I couldn't identify with certainty right off the cuff. At the end of spring migration, I studied my warbler photos along with many others and realized what was missing. I had photographed very few female birds.

This year I resolved to start rounding out my photo collection and making the necessary effort to be prepared for birds that are harder to identify. It was the best decision I could have made for improving my birding skills.

The female warblers may sport less flashy colors, but their subtle beauty is unmistakable. They aren't quick to give all of their secrets away. Given some time and patience, though, their colors and patterns start to come together and make the connection to their male counterparts a reasonable feat.

Aidan Place's big day at Frick Park was also a big day for my female warbler collection. Hooded, Magnolia, Bay-breasted, and Canada all joined the ranks as well as a second year Wilson's Warbler. The next day brought a female Black-and-white and a female American Redstart, an Orange-crowned Warbler, a hybrid Blue-winged Warbler with dark cheeks, and my first Philadelphia Vireo.

Photos were helpful, but more experienced birders were key to my finds and IDs. Tessa Rhinehart, Aidan Place, Nathan Hall, Sue Solomon, Jack Solomon, Nick Liadis, Jim Hausman, and my husband Kaleem all helped me sort out who-was-who either on the spot or after the fact.

Throughout the last four spring migrations many more birders have supported my interest in birding and have given me a leg up by allowing me to tag along beside them. It's my good fortune and pleasure to be a part of such a welcoming birding community. I wouldn't have gotten very far without it. I hope to continue honing my birding skills alongside (or 6 feet from) all of you. And I hope my female warbler collection is a meaningful gift of gratitude to all of you.

(Editor's note: Roger Tory Peterson, the field guide pioneer, is known famously for two pages of illustrations in his Field Guide to the Birds first published in the 1930s. The pages titled "Confusing Fall Warblers" were monochrome—no color.

In the salon of color photos on page 5, Charity Kheshgi advances identification toward what could be called "confusing spring females." Her photos from Frick Park in Pittsburgh are the first I've seen that focus especially on spring females.

As you can see, these females are not all bathed in bright sunlight. Some are pictured in realistically dull ambient light and sometimes partially hidden in foliage—exactly how you might often observe them. This is not, of course, a detailed identification guide. I hope it encourages you to study female plumage details in books, online references, or even better study in person with one of 3RBC's experienced birders.)

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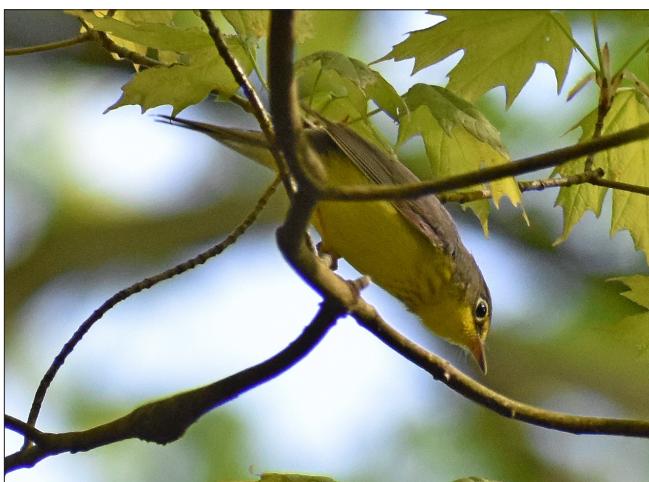
A Gallery of Spring Female Warblers by Charity Kheshgi



Pine Warbler



Magnolia Warbler



Canada Warbler



Tennessee Warbler



Bay-breasted Warbler



Yellow Warbler

The Peregrine



HIGHLIGHTS IN CANADA – The beautiful Evening Grosbeak at left was not unusual, but the Varied Thrush at right was a rare wanderer so far east of its normal range. Frank Izaguirre photographed them in his winter trip to frigid Canada.

Frigid Canada's Birds Warmed a Pair of Birders (Part 1)

By Frank Izaguirre

In February, Quebec is cold. Like, really cold! But is it too cold for Pittsburghers to bird? A brief window of mid-February travel time and a staked-out Boreal Owl prompted Adrienne and me to find out.

Before commencing any such trip, as may now be the birding standard, I thoroughly reviewed eBird, checking rarity reports and running my “needs” list through various potential destinations. As often happens, such research yielded a few interesting possibilities. The first was the aforementioned Boreal Owl at Réserve Naturelle de Pointe-Yamachiche in Quebec. That’s far from Pittsburgh, about 10 hours, and one never knows exactly how winter driving conditions will be, but Boreal Owl is one of only four species I have seen in the ABA Area that Adrienne has not. The bird seemed to be pretty regular: When would be our next chance for Boreal Owl?

I figured that if we drove all the way to Montreal first, we could spend a night and try for the Boreal the next day before continuing our journey west through Ontario. Another surprise yielded by pre-trip research was that Ottawa has a small population of Gray Partridges, which I later learned are barely holding on and were once much more common throughout the city. I first got clued into this intel when looking over Mike Fialkovich’s Flickr album of photos he had taken just a few weeks prior, and eBird seemed to indicate the birds were often located in a specific area not far west of the city.

The third enticing discovery was a slam dunk: a Varied Thrush regularly coming to a feeder in Haliburton County, Ontario, a little south of Algonquin Provincial Park. Since we had never birded in its breeding range in the Pacific Northwest, it would be a lifer.

For many 3RBC members, and indeed many birders and naturalists, Algonquin Provincial Park is a destination of significant intrigue, each season presenting different appeals and challenges mostly anchored around the excellent accessibility of several

boreal specialty birds. It is surprisingly close to Pittsburgh, just a full day’s drive if you avoid Toronto traffic and don’t experience any delays crossing the border. In August 2017, Adrienne and I visited Jack and Sue Solomon, seasoned Algonquin-enthusiasts, and experienced the place’s grandeur, howling with wolves, encountering most of the specialties, and twice happening upon a big bull moose while out on the trails. Algonquin has perhaps an ideal balance between wilderness and convenience. Experiencing Algonquin in winter had a different but strong appeal, and I’d heard winter was the best season to see American martens, which Mike had photographed at the visitor center feeders.

The plan came together, and we embarked on our journey. The first day driving north through New York was bitterly cold, hovering around zero degrees, but three and possibly four Rough-legged Hawks spotted along the highway were good omens. We arrived in Montreal a bit exhausted and cold-weary, and—no rest for the weary—I stayed up judging field notebook entries for the American Birding Association’s Young Birder of the Year contest. But the prospect of the Boreal and other winter delights the next morning launched us even farther northeast, a good way into this province where we’d never been before.

While researching the Boreal and trying to find the best notes for its likely whereabouts, I’d run into what was, but shouldn’t have been, a surprising issue: Nearly every checklist’s annotations were in French! I’d done my best with Google translator and asking Adrienne for help, as she speaks French, but all I knew was the bird was “across the river” and not far from an also-frequently-seen Northern Saw-whet Owl.

When we arrived, we saw cars lined up but no clear trail to head down. We drove back to the cars and saw someone walking with an enormous camera. I asked, “Have you seen any owls?”

Did Frank and Adrienne finally see a Boreal Owl? Wait for Part 2 in the September/October issue to find out.

Observations

How We Can Help Orioles Survive a Cold Early Spring

By Tom Moeller

For the first time ever, we had Baltimore Orioles visit our yard in Squirrel Hill this spring, although we have tried to lure them in other years. We have a store-bought oriole feeder, a cup glued to a plastic lid filled with jelly, and a bar with long screws to drive orange halves onto.

Nothing worked until this year when four orioles, two males and two females, arrived. Several members of the Three Rivers Birding Club have also reported seeing their first orioles in years or ever in their yards. It was not our skill at attracting birds that brought them in; it was the cold and lack of insects to eat.

This was a very cold spring. A record low temperature of 29 degrees was set on Saturday, May 9, and the high temperatures on May 9 and 11, 2020, were lower than the average low for those dates. Finally, in the last part of May temperatures were climbing, but the cold snap meant that very few insects were buzzing about for insectivores like orioles, grosbeaks, and warblers. These birds were not finding bugs to eat, so some of the orioles and grosbeaks visited any feeders that catered to their needs. Otherwise, they would have starved to death!

Which feeders cater to the needs of orioles and grosbeaks? Traditionally, grape or strawberry jelly has been advocated to feed these birds. Halved oranges or apples, even grapefruit, grapes, and bananas are fruits that attract them too. Suet and peanut butter are other possibilities. However, there are cautions against peanut butter during breeding season, which may cause egg-binding in smaller birds. Julie Zickefoose recommends against jellies, which are essentially sugar with food coloring. She prefers feeding these tropical birds the fruits they are used to eating, along with her own “bug omelets” and mealworms.

One feeding contraption we have is a commercial oriole feeder. It is orange with four ports that have to be pressed to get “oriole nectar” out. Each port has a perch. However, this feeder is too complicated for a starving bird. It’s easier to pick up a grape and eat it in the nearby hedge. Hummingbird feeders have also been used by many species of orioles as food sources, but ours went untouched by these birds. Again, the oranges, grapes, and jelly were quicker to consume.

As an aside, the grape jelly and grapes attracted other birds. Starlings, which eat everything, stole many a grape from our “oriole feeder,” and a local robin has taken an interest and eaten jelly and taken grapes too.

The heat is on now, so the orioles in my neighborhood are settling down to courting and nesting. They still occasionally visit our halved oranges, but as the ants, grasshoppers, spiders, and their preference, caterpillars (including the hairy ones other birds shun) repopulate nature, they fend better for themselves now. The benefit of providing the necessary foods for these starving birds, besides helping them to survive, is that we now have nesting orioles in the neighborhood.

Be sure to view my video of a male Baltimore Oriole digging into an orange at my feeder on the “Videos” page of the 3RBC website.

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MENU SELECTIONS – This male Baltimore Oriole chose an orange from Tom’s menu, and the female liked the jelly cup.



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Tom’s Observations gallery online describes Baltimore Orioles’ behavior as they arrived in his yard this spring.

Birds in the Three Rivers Area

A Mild Winter Brought Some Unseasonal Birds

By Mike Fialkovich, Bird Reports Editor

It was a mild winter with a minor snowfall in early February. The rivers did not freeze, so there was a lack of rare gulls and waterfowl on the rivers. The mild weather may have been responsible for several out-of-season birds that were reported.

A group of five or six **Tundra Swans** flew over Natrona Heights 2/5 (PH) that might have been early migrants or wanderers. A **Northern Shoveler** was on the Ohio River at Osborne 2/16 (JO). Five were at Duck Hollow 3/8 (TM, NM) followed by a nice count of 12 on 3/27 (MK). A **Northern Pintail** was a good find at Wingfield Pines 3/22 (JP) to at least 3/25. A **Redhead** was at the Moody Road ponds in Findlay Twp. 2/23, the lone report (MV). This site has attracted waterfowl for many years, but it appears that a construction project is in progress at the site, so the fate of the ponds remains unknown. Six **Greater Scaup** at Woods Run on the Ohio River 2/1 (PB) was the only report. A **Lesser Scaup** was at Dashields Dam on the same day (MV). A **Surf Scoter** was at Tarentum 3/21 (Al Bowers). A **Long-tailed Duck** was on the Ohio River at Emsworth Dam 2/2 (MV).

A **Common Loon** was at Duck Hollow on the Monongahela River 3/29 (AP). A **Killdeer** at Frick Park 2/17 may have been a returning migrant (MK). An **American Woodcock** was found at Boyce-Mayview Park 2/19 (JF, MM).

A **Bonaparte's Gull** was photographed at Duck Hollow 2/1 (LK, JHA). Bonaparte's are rare in winter in Allegheny County. Another, an early migrant, was there 3/27 (AP).

A **Rough-legged Hawk** was spotted flying over Wingfield Pines 3/22 (JP, JF). **Osprey** returned to the nesting site in Leetsdale 3/29 (MV). **Turkey Vultures** were seen regularly at various locations through the winter. Up to 92 were in Fox Chapel in February (BS and eBird reports), an impressive number.

A **Short-eared Owl** continued 2/1 at Imperial (JP). The immature **Red-headed Woodpecker** at Allegheny Cemetery in Lawrenceville in December continued through March.

Merlins were reported from O'Hara Twp. 3/11 (BSh), Schenley Park 3/23 (KSJ), and Oakland 3/24 (FI).

A very early **Blue-headed Vireo** was found at Imperial 3/31 (AP). An **Eastern Phoebe** found at Duck Hollow 12/28 continued at least into February and probably overwintered at the site.

Two **Common Ravens** were observed in Bridgeville carrying nesting material 2/7 (RT). They had been observed in the area for months. If successful, this would be a new breeding location in Allegheny County. There were two high counts of **Fish Crows**: 32 in Oakland 3/24 (FI) and 38 in Squirrel Hill 3/27 (MKu).

A **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** at North Park 3/23 (AP) was early. The **Marsh Wren** reported at Wingfield Pines in the fall remained into March (various observers). This site has become a regular wintering spot for this species that is rare in the county.

A **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** was at South Park 2/8 (JF) and one visited a feeder in Gibsonia through February (reported to MV). There are several other entries in eBird for the season. Ruby-crowned Kinglets are very rare in western Pennsylvania in winter. Could the mild weather have led to so many wintering birds?

A very early or overwintering **Gray Catbird** was at South Park 3/31 (JF). A **Hermit Thrush** visited a feeding station in

Churchill 2/27 to at least 3/25 (WS).

Six **Eastern Towhees** were in South Park 2/28 (JF). Two **Chipping Sparrows** were photographed at a feeder in Verona 2/15 (RD). **Swamp Sparrows** wintered in the wetlands at Wingfield Pines (various observers). A number of observers noted a lack of **Dark-eyed Juncos** this winter, with only small numbers observed. **Fox Sparrows** arrived in late March with 2 in Schenley Park 3/20 (MF), 1 at Boyce-Mayview Park 3/27 (ST), 3 at Duck Hollow 3/29 (AP), 3 at Frick Park 3/31 (FI), and 2 at Imperial 3/31 (AP).

A male **Purple Finch** visited a feeder in Pine Twp. 3/25-28 (PL, SL), and Natrona Heights: 1 on 3/17 and 2 on 3/27 (DB).

Blackbirds are rare here in winter. **Red-winged Blackbirds** were present at Wingfield Pines during the season (various observers). A **Common Grackle** at a feeder in O'Hara Twp. 2/21 (BSh) could have been a returning migrant. **Rusty Blackbird** reports were 1 at Peters Creek in Jefferson Borough 3/15 (JHA, BMu), 2 in Pine Twp. 3/22 with 1 remaining 3/24-25 (PL, SL), and 1 at Frick Park 3/31 (FI). An **Eastern Meadowlark** at Imperial 2/1 (JP) could have been an early migrant or an overwintering bird.

The male **Painted Bunting** at a feeder in O'Hara Twp. remained through March and was observed by many thanks to the hospitality of the homeowner (BSh).

An amazing number of **Northern Cardinals** were in West Deer Twp. 2/14 (AA). The observer tallied 66 birds in his yard, and a photo of about half of the group was posted in eBird.

Observers: Alvin Anthony, Paul Brown, Roger Desy, Mike Fialkovich, John Flannigan, Jim Hausman (JHA), Paul Hess, Frank Izaguirre, Lisa Kauffman, Michelle Kienholz, Malcolm Kurtz (MKu), Pat Lynch, Sherron Lynch, Michelle Mannella, Nancy Moeller, Tom Moeller, Bob Mulvihill (BMu), John Orndorff, Joe Papp, Aidan Place, Kate St. John (KSJ), Walt Shaffer, Brian Shema (BSh), Shannon Thompson, Ryan Tomazin, Mark Vass.



A WELCOME VISITOR – Rusty Blackbirds are uncommon spring migrants in Allegheny County, and Frank Izaguirre was fortunate to photograph this one at Frick Park on March 31, 2020.

