



# The Peregrine

## Three Rivers Birding Club Newsletter

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

Vol. 19, No.6 November/December 2020



*I SEE LUNCH -- Mike Fialkovich photographed this intensely concentrating Northern Hawk Owl at Schomberg, Ontario, in January 2020. Good thing Mike wasn't the vole or mouse it spotted. In didn't matter, though. The owl dove quickly to the ground but flew back up without capturing a meal.*

### Our Fine Photographers Will Wow Us on Dec. 9

The club's favorite annual night of photos called the "Slide Slam" is coming up at our meeting on Wednesday, December 9.

Again, it will be a Zoom meeting online, with dazzling images from club members' cameras. Our many talented photographers will present their beautiful bird photos directly on your personal screens, giving you an even better viewing experience.

Photographers wishing to participate should email Program Chairman Dave Brooke at [davbrooke@gmail.com](mailto:davbrooke@gmail.com) to reserve a spot. Dave will supply you with details of the program.

Relatively new members may wonder why we call this a "Slide Slam." Well, the Three Rivers Birding Club was founded in 2001, and our first photo show was in the ancient pre-digital year of 2003 when images were projected onto the screen from "color slides." Remember those?

Passcodes to our virtual meeting will be sent to members in the days before the meeting. You can connect to the meeting by the Zoom app on your computer, tablet, or smartphone. Download a free Zoom app to your device in advance at this website: [https://zoom.us/download#client\\_4meeting](https://zoom.us/download#client_4meeting).

Access will open at 7:00 PM to give you time to log on to Zoom. Our business meeting and regular announcements will begin at 7:30 PM, and the photo presentation will start at 8:00 PM.

**(Note that this is the second Wednesday of the month, not our usual first-Wednesday schedule.)**

### Pittsburgh Christmas Count Will Be on December 26

**By Brian Shema, Pittsburgh CBC Compiler**

Please join in the Audubon Society of Western PA's 2020 Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, December 26.

Participation is free, and experience is not necessary. New birdwatchers can be teamed up with experienced birders.

Counting birds at feeders is also an important part of this count, so you don't even have to leave your home!

Because of possible COVID-19 restrictions, a virtual compilation event is planned for December 27 at 6:00 PM via Zoom instead of the traditional dinner. Registration will be required, so we can send a Zoom link to those who register.

Check [aswp.org](http://aswp.org) to register for the event and for details of COVID-19 safety measures during the count.

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**To participate, contact one of the local area leaders listed on page 3.**



*WATCH FOR THESE – Poor seed crops in Canada are sending Pine Siskins south, and CBCs may list many. Steve Gosser spotted one in his McCandless Township yard on September 19, 2020*

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

## President's Message

# This Is How Bald Eagles Returned to Pennsylvania

By Sheree Daugherty

No bird captures the attention of a wide range of people more than the Bald Eagle. When I'm out birding and people notice the binoculars hanging around my neck, they are eager to tell me where they have seen eagles. These are often people who have very little interest in birds; but Bald Eagles, the majestic symbol of our nation, get them excited.

Spotting a Bald Eagle is becoming fairly common in Pennsylvania. Forty years ago the population of the Bald Eagle was in steep decline. There were only three nests in Pennsylvania in 1980. Habitat destruction, poor water quality and, especially, the effects of DDT took a toll on the birds. Thanks to an ambitious reintroduction program by the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC), eagles have made a successful come back. The plan was to capture wild eagle nestlings in Canada and bring them back to Pennsylvania for rearing and release to the wild.

With funding from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Endangered Species Fund and the Richard King Mellon Foundation, and with cooperation of the Canadian government, the first crew from PGC set out to retrieve young eagles in 1983.

Fortunately there was still a healthy population in Canada. Before GPS technology, Canadian biologists scouted out and marked nest trees on topographic maps. The Pennsylvania Game Commission crew used those maps as a guide to active nests.

Arriving in Saskatchewan, the PGC team loaded their gear on an Otter floatplane and flew to a remote location to set up a cache area where the captured birds could be kept and cared for. Some members of the team stayed at this site to tend to the birds. The remaining team members divided into two groups of four—a pilot, a climber and two ground support people. They then boarded smaller four person floatplanes to get to the eagle nests.

Using the marked topographic maps, it was a challenge to find the nests by eye while flying low over the leafy treetops. Once a designated nest was spotted, the small floatplane landed on the water and the team bushwhacked through the forest to the nest tree.

At the tree, a climber ascended 35 to 80 feet to the nest while the agitated adult eagles circled overhead. Each nest had to hold a minimum of two young, leaving at least one for the parents to raise. The five-to-seven week old eaglet was placed in a sack and lowered to the ground, where the support team transferred the bird to a specially designed crate and loaded it onto the cramped plane. This process was repeated by each crew two or three times each day before returning to the cache site where the young birds were processed and examined.

In two days the first recovery team captured 12 eaglets. The recovery missions continued annually in Canada for seven years with a total of 88 birds collected.

Back in Pennsylvania, the young birds were taken to one of two elevated platforms with individual compartments—hack towers—where they were raised until old enough to be released. Each hack tower provided a safe area with nest boxes and perching branches. Interns fed the young birds using long pronged sticks passed through small openings. This technique, and the use of one-way glass, insured that the eagles did not see their human caretakers: It was important that the eaglets not learn to associate

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### Send articles and/or illustrations to:

Paul Hess, Editor  
[phess@salsgiver.com](mailto:phess@salsgiver.com)  
1412 Hawthorne St., Natrona Heights, PA 15065

### Send ideas or items for the website to:

Tom Moeller, Webmaster  
[thosjmoel@gmail.com](mailto:thosjmoel@gmail.com)

### Send questions and suggestions to:

Sheree Daugherty, President  
[shereedaugherty@gmail.com](mailto:shereedaugherty@gmail.com)  
522 Avery St., Pittsburgh, PA 15212

### Suggest or volunteer to lead outings to:

Steve Thomas, Outings Director  
[thomassj22@verizon.net](mailto:thomassj22@verizon.net)  
309 Center Ave., Aspinwall, PA 15215

### Report bird sightings to:

Mike Fialkovich, Bird Reports Editor  
[mpfial@verizon.net](mailto: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](mailto:thosjmoel@gmail.com)

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humans with food. At 12 weeks old, the birds were ready to fledge; a gate was opened, allowing them to fly free.

Before considering the reintroduction a success, the project had to meet a goal set by PGC: 150 pairs of eagles with 60% of the nests being successful over a period of five years. That goal was reached in 2008 with a total of 156 nests. The 88 relocated birds, along with a very few wild birds, formed the core population that successfully reestablished Bald Eagles in Pennsylvania.

In 2014 the Bald Eagle was removed from the state's threatened species lists. PGC's State Ornithologist, Sean Murphy explained, "Once the state population was delisted and classified as recovered, we no longer surveyed the state for all nests. The year after delisting, we amassed nesting records for 304 nests. Since that time, the agency has no evidence to suggest the population has not continued to grow." Murphy continued, "We have records for nests occurring in all counties except Cambria. That is not to say there may not be a nest there."

Dan Brauning, PGC's Chief Wildlife Diversity Manager sums it up well: "It's a real testament to our capacity to bring about successful change. It was a 40-year story. It did not happen overnight. Our nation's symbol was at the brink of extinction and we recovered it. That's very significant."

Yes, indeed it is!

## Outings (Not) to Come

Steve Thomas, 3RBC's Outings Director, is disappointed to announce once again that no further outings will be scheduled at this time.

During the continuing COVID-19 outbreak, the safety of our members and other participants is paramount in our decision. We will resume our outings when it is safe to do so.

## More Stay-at-Home Enjoyment

In the September/October issue of *The Peregrine*, readers were invited to tell members about their stay-at-home experiences watching birds during the pandemic. 3RBC member Margie Kern offers us this delightful report from her yard in McCandless, Allegheny County:

"The birds seem to really love my porch. Over the years I have had five different species nest on my porch. House Wrens, Tufted Titmice, and Mourning Doves have each nested once. Carolina Chickadees and Carolina Wrens have each nested five or six times over the years.

"This year the Carolina Wrens used my wren roosting box to nest twice! Their first brood fledged in April and the second in July. In past years I was lucky enough to watch the baby birds fledge from the box. This year I missed seeing them go both times. I was probably in the bathroom..."



*ANOTHER INVADER* – In addition to Pine Siskins, as noted on page 1, Red-breasted Nuthatches are predicted to move south to us this winter. Watch for them on our CBCs. Steve Gosser saw this one in his McCandless Township yard on September 19, 2020.

## Pittsburgh CBC Leaders

Contact one of these local area leaders to participate in the annual Pittsburgh Christmas Bird Count on December 26:

**Fox Chapel** – Brian Shema, 412-963-6100;  
[bshema@aswp.org](mailto:bshema@aswp.org)

**Franklin Park** – Stacey Widenhofer, 412-741-7536;  
[stacey.fhnc@gmail.com](mailto:stacey.fhnc@gmail.com)

**Frick & Highland Parks** – Mark VanderVen, 425-273-1786;  
[nevrednav@gmail.com](mailto:nevrednav@gmail.com)

**Hampton Twp.** – Brady Porter, 412-337-7397;  
[porterb@duq.edu](mailto:porterb@duq.edu)

**Indiana** – Steve Gosser, 412-855-5220;  
[smgoss@verizon.net](mailto:smgoss@verizon.net)

**Kilbuck & Ohio** – Paul Brown, 412-963-1979;  
[pmbrown1944@gmail.com](mailto:pmbrown1944@gmail.com)

**North Park** – Meg Scanlon, 724-935-2170;  
[latodami@yahoo.com](mailto:latodami@yahoo.com)

**Oakmont & Harmar** – David Yeany, 814-221-4361;  
[dyeany@paconserve.org](mailto:dyeany@paconserve.org)

**O'Hara** – Steve Thomas, 412-782-4696;  
[thomassj22@verizon.net](mailto:thomassj22@verizon.net)

**Penn Hills & Verona** – Mike Smith, 412-526-8360;  
[skeetor72@yahoo.com](mailto:skeetor72@yahoo.com)

**Pittsburgh (rest of city)** – Mike Fialkovich, 412-731-3581;  
[mpfial@verizon.net](mailto:mpfial@verizon.net)

**Ross & McCandless** – Bob Machesney, 412-366-7869;  
[remach@aol.com](mailto:remach@aol.com)

## Other CBCs in Southwestern PA

• **South Hills:** Saturday, December 19 – Nancy Page, 412-221-4795; [nanpaul@verizon.net](mailto:nanpaul@verizon.net) or Gigi Gerben (412-973-9760; [kasgerb@yahoo.com](mailto:kasgerb@yahoo.com)).

• **Imperial:** Sunday, January 3, 2021 – Bob Mulvihill, 412-522-5729; [Robert.mulvihill@aviary.org](mailto:Robert.mulvihill@aviary.org).

• **Buffalo Creek Valley (Butler County):** Saturday, December 19 – George Reese, 724-353-9649; [g.reese@gaiconsultants.com](mailto:g.reese@gaiconsultants.com).

• **Buffalo Creek (Washington County):** Sunday, December 20 – Larry Helgerman, [bobolink1989@gmail.com](mailto:bobolink1989@gmail.com).

• **South Butler:** Saturday, January 2, 2021 – Chris Kubiak, 412-963-6100; [ckubiak@aswp.org](mailto:ckubiak@aswp.org).

A list of all Pennsylvania CBC dates and contacts will be available in the December issue of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology newsletter, *The PSO Pileated* ([www.pabirds.org](http://www.pabirds.org)).

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## You'll Love These Looks at Birding – Including Pittsburgh

By Paul Hess

This is the essence of delight. The creator of this visual birding fun is Sal Ingraham (they/them), a naturalist and cartoonist with a Pittsburgh connection. The cartoon above focuses on a winter visit to Florida, but Sal's love of Pittsburgh remains.

Sal grew up in the birding community, acquiring a passion for wildlife and travel from their father, Stephen Ingraham. Sal attended the Festival of the Cranes in New Mexico for the first time as a 6-year-old, and during their teens worked as a professional staffer for Zeiss Sport Optics.

After detouring through other jobs and pursuits (librarian, piano teacher, timber farmer, barista, art teacher), they were able to join Zeiss again as a professional staffer and began drawing comics about birds and other wildlife in the U.S, Central, and South America.

Sal has also been a guide and marketing manager for Wildside Nature Tours (among many other jobs!).

This allowed Sal to travel and bird extensively in the United States and in Central and South America. They have lived in Pittsburgh off and on over the last seven years, although they

currently reside outside Albuquerque, New Mexico.

In addition to managing Wildside's social media and marketing, Sal continues to draw comics as much as possible and is studying to be a bird bander.

When in Pittsburgh, Sal's favorite birding spot is Duck Hollow, where many of the comics are set, but the subjects span the natural world everywhere.

I think you'll enjoy seeing more examples of Sal's cartoons depicting Duck Hollow and many other birding locations online at [instagram.com/duck\\_hollow\\_comics](https://www.instagram.com/duck_hollow_comics).

Other locations prominent in the illustrations are Penn State University Shaver's Creek Environmental Center in central Pennsylvania: [tinyurl.com/shavers-creek](https://tinyurl.com/shavers-creek).

Sal's work has also appeared in the American Birding Association's *Birding* magazine.

Long ago, "cartoons" and "comics" were considered merely something to laugh at. Now, cartoons such as Sal's have evolved to arouse deep warmth and enjoyment. Thanks, Sal!

## A Birder from Europe Finds Opposite Experiences Here

(Editor's note: The author is a British birder who moved to Pittsburgh. Jack and Sue Solomon met Louis in Frick Park and told me about him. I asked him to tell our club members about differences between birding in the United Kingdom and birding in the U.S.A. First, a bit of biography:

"I grew up in London and worked as an editor for a scholarly publishing house. Three years ago I came to Pittsburgh for work, where I met my wife. I am now working as a tutor.

"I've been birding from a very young age (from about 10) and have been lucky enough to bird around the world, from the Middle East to Southeast Asia to Latin America. A highlight would probably be finding Oman's fourth-ever record of Common Hawk-Cuckoo, or lucking into being at Batumi raptor count in Georgia (the country in the Caucasus, not the state) on a day when we counted 23,000 Honey Buzzards!"

### By Louis Freeland-Haynes

Here are some of the differences I've noticed birding here vs. the UK.

Since moving from London to Pittsburgh in March, I've been enjoying lots of birding in and around Pittsburgh. Although I've done some birding in the Neotropics, North American birdlife is very new to me.

A couple of differences really surprised me. The first thing that struck me was that woodpeckers are absolutely everywhere here! I've had four species of woodpecker in the same tree in Frick Park. Only three species of woodpecker breed in the whole of the UK, and another (the Wryneck) is an infrequent visitor, and it took me five years of birding to see all of those. You guys take your woodpeckers for granted! In Ireland woodpeckers are a major rarity, Great Spotted Woodpeckers having colonized only in the last 10 years after a long absence. Seeing my first Pileated Woodpecker and watching the numbers of Northern Flickers swell during migration (no European woodpeckers are migratory) were real highlights of my first few weeks birding here.

What the UK lacks in woodpeckers, it makes up for in wildfowl. In the UK even the smallest village pond will have a couple of species of duck on it, plus the ubiquitous coot and moorhen. When I first visited Lake Arthur, I couldn't get over seeing such a big expanse of water with almost no ducks. I guess the proximity to the sea everywhere in the UK (you're never more than 70 miles from it) and the amount of coastal wetland habitat makes a big difference. Having grown up birding along the Thames, where I've had 15 species of duck, and seeing 10 species on a winter's day is not unusual, the Allegheny is a little boring!

Another experience to get used to here as spring progressed was "warbler neck." Warbler neck as a phenomenon does not exist in the UK! In Western Europe the birds that tend to excite us are found in low scrub; rarely would I find myself craning to see a bird in the canopy. Our European warblers, chats, and flycatchers are all much more likely to be found by beating around a bush than by looking in the tops of trees. In the first weeks of spring migration I probably missed a fair few birds in Frick simply by looking at the wrong angle. Birding in the UK is a lot easier on the neck.

Overall I've been enjoying getting used to a new avifauna and the challenges of birding in a new place, and Yinzers are a friendly bunch. If you see me out and about, please do say hi!



*NEW BIRDS, NEW DIFFERENCES* – Louis Freeland-Haynes, pictured here in his new-found habitat in Pittsburgh, grew up birding in the United Kingdom. He found some interesting opposites in U.S. and European birds and their behavior.

## Magee Marsh Is an Important Stopover for Rusty Blackbirds

### By Paul Hess

3RBC members know Magee Marsh as a spring treasure for seeing warblers and other migrants right before their eyes in May.

But something else takes place during the spring and fall migration seasons that goes largely unnoticed by birders because it takes place before birders arrive in spring and don't visit in fall.

The unappreciated thing is this: Northwestern Ohio along Lake Erie in Ohio is a crucial stopover site for migrating Rusty Blackbirds, one of our most severely declining species.

In his Crane Creek blog in 2011, Kenn Kaufman called northwestern Ohio "among the few remaining areas of the continent where large concentrations of Rusty Blackbirds still can be found consistently during migration" ([tinyurl.com/Rusty-Blackbirds-Ohio](https://tinyurl.com/Rusty-Blackbirds-Ohio)).

A research paper in 2020 in *The Condor: Ornithological Applications* affirms Kenn's judgment. James R. Wright at The Ohio State University and his co-authors assessed the Rusty Blackbirds' habitat selection at the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge and Magee Marsh during the migration seasons using radio telemetry to locate foraging and roosting flocks. See their findings at [tinyurl.com/y4hkrffx](https://tinyurl.com/y4hkrffx).

Their report concludes that the appropriate shallow-water habitat at the Ottawa and Magee study sites are "good news for land managers and conservationists." The results suggest that even small-scale management efforts can provide usable habitat for migrating birds.

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## Observations

### Waxwings' Summer Ends (Part 2)

*(Editor's note: In Part 1 in the last issue, we learned how a male waxwing assists the incubating female and protects the nest from cowbird parasitism. In Part 2 Tom concludes his chronicle of this species' fascinating breeding behavior.)*

#### By Tom Moeller

The newly hatched waxwings are altricial, with eyes closed, naked, and needing to be fed in the nest. They hatch in the order the eggs were laid. The nestlings are pink, but their skin turns dark during their first day. Both parents will feed the young chicks – at first with mashed insects but by the third day with more fruit than insects. The nestlings remain in the nest for 16 to 18 days. Feather shafts appear in the main feather tracts in five days; their eyes open in about a week; feathers break out of their shafts from 8 to 14 days after hatching. The parents both keep the nest tidy by eating the fecal sacs of the young for about ten days. By then the nestlings can defecate over the side of the nest.

The female Cedar Waxwing will brood the hatchlings during their first five days and then begin helping the male with their feeding. With the first clutch, however, the female's attention to the young begins to wane about the tenth day after hatching as she starts internal development for a second clutch. The male must take up the slack in caring for their offspring. Plus, he has to begin courting his mate again for her second brood and begin gathering material for a second nest, all the time keeping watch on their nesting territory. The waxwing pair is very busy tending to their first clutch, courting each other, building another nest, and maintaining their nest territory.

The first clutch of nestlings will leave the nest after about two and half weeks, but the parents (mostly the male) will still feed them for another ten days. The fledglings are mostly gray with a streaked breast, a small black mask, and lots of white on their faces. They do have the yellow margin on their tails and a small crest. They should be good flyers after six days. When self-sufficient, the fledglings will fly off to join the juvenile flocks to feed together. Can one imagine the phenomenal growth of these young birds from naked, blind, pink hatchlings to self-sufficient, flying, social juveniles in less than thirty days!

The waxwings' second nest cycle seems to be on a quicker pace. Usually there are fewer eggs, yet the young develop at the same rate. The secret to getting two broods into each season is the overlapping of the nest cycles with the second clutch beginning well before the first clutch is done maturing. The tremendous effort of male Cedar Waxwing is a definite factor in achieving the two nest cycles, as is the tight bond between the male and female.

How successful is the Cedar Waxwing's practice of producing two broods per season? Without interference (predation, a devastating storm, the loss of a mate, etc.) pretty good! The devotion of the parents to the nest by rarely leaving it unattended, the impressive work of the male during the transition from one clutch to the next, and the lasting, close bond between the male and female Cedar Waxwings throughout are factors which result in a 70% success rate of fledged young, far better than many other bird species.

We did not observe our waxwings after July 16. Perhaps, we thought, the pair had relocated for their second clutch, yet we had seen no young from the first in the area. Perhaps some predator



*FOOD FOR FALL – Watch trees and shrubs with red berries in the autumn for a good chance to find Cedar Waxwings feasting. Tom Moeller photographed this one in a classic pose at Erie National Wildlife Refuge in November 2011.*

had wreaked havoc on the nest. (Crows had been destructively active in the neighborhood.) The past month had been extremely dry and hot with temperatures in the 90s, not good for the lawns nor berry-producing trees. Given the waxwings' anathema for heat, perhaps the weather and lack of water had been factors in their disappearance. It was disappointing not to see a familiar bird with its distinctive crest sitting erect on top of the maple tree.

Surprise! Three weeks to the day later, Thursday, July 16 to Thursday, August 6, the Cedar Waxwing reappeared in his perch tree. He visited two more times that day, and again on August 9 and August 14. Where had he been?

As I explained above – he was probably quite busy feeding and taking care of the fledglings from his first brood, courting his mate for a second brood, and gathering new material for a second nest. It was not really late for a waxwing to begin a second brood in late July; however, other forces may have been against that happening. The lack of rain and hot days were two issues working against berry trees and bushes producing enough food for a growing bird family. The first clutch of waxwing babies may have just made it to fledging from the nest. Perhaps not. Even in August we never saw any fledglings in the area. I had gone over to the street to look for the nest but never did find it.

Unfortunately, August 14 was the last time we saw a Cedar Waxwing in the maple tree out our window. It has been an unusual breeding season with two firsts for our yard – Baltimore Orioles in the spring and Cedar Waxwings in the summer. We can be grateful we were stuck at home to be able to watch these beautiful birds visit our neighborhood.

Tom's photo gallery on the 3RBC website depicts waxwings' entire passage through their breeding season. Added to the gallery are his references.

## Birds in the Three Rivers Area

### Unusual Breeding Records Highlighted June-July 2020

By Mike Fialkovich, Bird Reports Editor

There were a few surprises this summer with out-of-season birds raising hopes for rare breeding. No evidence of breeding was found, but it added interest to the season.

A male **Blue-winged Teal** was at Wingfield Pines 6/12 to at least 7/11 (FK, various observers). It's been years since this species bred in the county as a rare breeder at Imperial. This male was not observed with a mate, so it was most likely a lone male lingering in the area. Two late **Ruddy Ducks** were photographed at Duck Hollow 6/2 (NL).

A **Common Nighthawk** nest was observed and monitored in Verona in June (SK). Gaining a vantage point on the roof of a building, the observer photographed the incubating female with a single chick. Not many of us have had an opportunity to see a young nighthawk or a nest.

An **American Avocet** was a great find at Riverfront Park on the South Side of Pittsburgh 7/24 (EE, various observers). Many people were able to enjoy this elegant wader before it was observed flying off near dusk, in typical avocet form. It was at a busy city park with bikers, walkers, boaters, and other activities going on. It seemed unconcerned while on the small mudflat. This was the 10th Allegheny County record.

Birders surveyed two **Herring Gull** breeding colonies. Several counts were made at the Emsworth Dam on the Ohio River in June (PB, MV). The high count there included 43 adults and 10 chicks. The maximum at the Highland Park Bridge colony on the Allegheny River was 44 adults at 15 chicks 6/21 (MV).

An adult and a fledgling **Green Heron** were photographed at North Park in July (SG).

**Ospreys** were at Emsworth Dam and on nearby Neville Island (PB, MV). Two nests were active again this year, and one bird was seen along the Allegheny River in Harmar Twp. 7/26 (AH).

A **Barred Owl** was at North Park 7/17 (LS). This species is a local resident in the county with only a few reliable locations. They may be under-reported due to their secretive behavior.

A **Merlin** was unexpected at Hays Woods 7/3 (MK). Could this species be found breeding here someday?

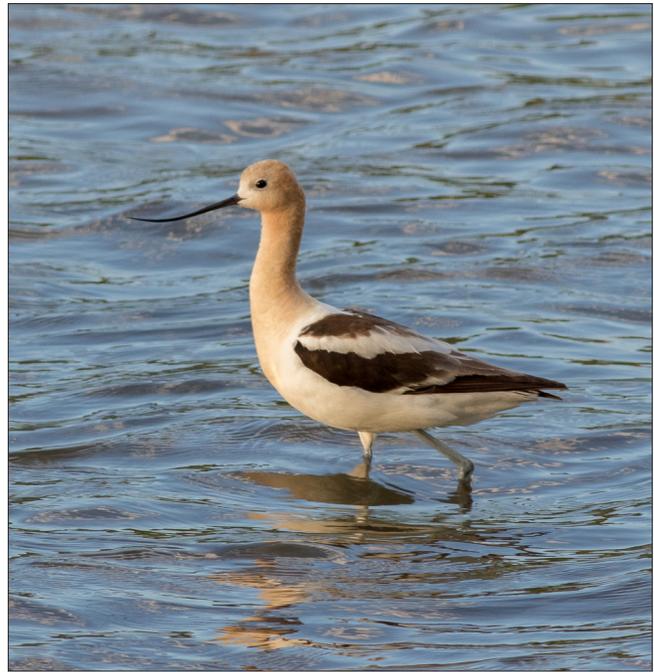
There were numerous **Northern Bobwhite** reports, so the question is who is releasing them? Most were eBird reports that included single birds in Monroeville 6/12, Pittsburgh 6/13, Wexford 6/15, and Harmar Twp. 7/22 (JV).

An **Alder Flycatcher** was found in a brushy field in North Park 6/15 (NH). This is a rare migrant in the county and not known to breed here, although they do breed just to the north. It was present for about a week singing regularly, but not heard after that.

For the second year in a row, a **Bank Swallow** nesting colony was active at Chapel Harbor in O'Hara Twp. (JV, MD, AH). There were fewer birds this year, with a high count of only 7. This is a rare breeding species in the county, and the colony may be lost because of plans to alter the bank where they nest.

A male **Purple Finch** was in Indiana Twp. in June (DYe). A male was in Pine Twp. 7/1 and a juvenile was there 7/20-23 (PL, SL). This continues to be the sole location in the county where they are regularly reported to be breeding.

**Henslow's, Savannah, and Grasshopper Sparrows** were noted at Imperial in June and July (various observers). There is one area of grassland adjacent to a new industrial park that is



*ALWAYS SPECTACULAR – Migrating American Avocets, perhaps surprisingly, sometimes stop to rest in urban areas. This one chose Pittsburgh's Riverfront Park on the Monongahela River along the Southside. Mike Fialkovich photographed it on July 7, 2020.*

now providing habitat for these declining species in the county. Bobolinks were also in the same area this summer.

Three **Yellow-breasted Chats** were at Hilltop Park in Cecil Twp. 6/10 (LN).

**Ovenbird** is a local breeding species in the county, where Deer Lakes Park is the only location where they are regular every summer. Two at Sewickley Heights Park 6/7 were notable (JC), and I was seen at Harrison Hills Park in June (DB) where they are currently not known to breed.

A **Worm-eating Warbler** was at Harrison Hills Park 6/9 where they are known to breed (MF). The male **Lawrence's Warbler** hybrid discovered at Deer Lakes Park in May continued into June and set up a territory (DB). It was observed squabbling with a neighboring **Blue-winged Warbler** (DYe). A **Black-and-white Warbler** was an unusual June find at Frick Park 6/8 (MT). It could have been a late migrant. Black-and-white Warbler is a local breeder in the county with two known locations.

A male **Prothonotary Warbler** present in late May at Boyce-Mayview Park was last reported 6/12 (various observers). Hopes were raised for breeding in the county because the habitat is perfect for this species, and snags and bird boxes at the park provided nesting cavities. However, it apparently moved on.

A **Kentucky Warbler** was at Frick Park 6/6 (BMu). This is notable because the species was formerly a common breeder in the county, and it could have been a male on territory. Kentucky Warblers continue to breed at Harrison Hills Park and Deer Lakes Park in the northeastern part of the county. A **Cerulean Warbler** was noted at Frick Park 6/5 and 6/28 (ZV, eBird). A recording was made of the bird singing. Ceruleans were present in the Sewickley Heights Park area where they regularly breed.

A late **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was at Boyce-Mayview Park 6/1 (JF) and 2 were at Hartwood Acres 6/6 (MKu). This is a rare breeder in the county. A late **Black-throated Blue Warbler** was in Schenley Park 6/3 (KSJ). There is one other record of this species

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# The Peregrine



*A WELCOME BREEDING RECORD – Green Herons have not been a common breeding species in Allegheny County, so confirmations such as this in North Park are exceptionally welcome. Steve Gosser photographed the fledgling on July 3, 2020, and discovered one of its likely parents stalking intently for a possible meal on July 11. Statewide, confirmed breeding records were stable from the first Breeding Bird Atlas in 1983-1989 to the second in 2004-2009.*

## **Birds in the Three Rivers**

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in the first few days of June from Riverview Park many years ago. Up to four **Prairie Warblers** were still at Imperial in July despite the near total destruction of their former habitat (OL, JVa, LK, MK, RT). A **Black-throated Green Warbler** was at Harrison Hills Park 6/28 (DB). The species was noted there last year but not confirmed breeding. They are not known to breed in Allegheny County, but do breed at a site in southern Butler (Todd Nature Reserve) a short distance north of Harrison Hills Park.

**Blue Grosbeaks** returned to Imperial this year, where a male and female were seen tending a juvenile 7/26 (MV, JF, RB) and were observed through the end of July. They were in the same area as in June 2018 when they were last recorded there. The habitat is further degraded compared to two years ago due to development at the site. Despite the destruction, these birds returned (presuming they are the same individual pair).

*Observers: Dave Brooke, Paul Brown, Ron Burkert, Jack Chaillet, Michael David, Emily Eckel, Mike Fialkovich, John Flannigan, Steve Gosser, Nathan Hall, Amy Henrici, Fred Kachmarik, Lisa Kaufmann, Michelle Kienholz, Scott Kinzey, Malcolm Kurtz (MKu), Nick Liadis, Oliver Lindhiem, Pat Lynch, Sherron Lynch, Bob Mulvihill (BMu), Lauren Nagoda, Mariam Ohanjanyan, Kate St. John, Liz Spence, Ryan Tomazin, Molly Toth, Jim Valimont, Mark Vass, John Vassallo (JVa), Zach Vaughan, David Yeany II (DYe).*



*THANK GOODNESS! – These Pileated Woodpecker nestlings are relieved that their parent has come with a meal. Dave Brooke photographed these at Harrison Hills Park on June 26, 2020. Confirmed breeding by Pileated in Pennsylvania increased 22% from the first Breeding Bird Atlas in 1983-1989 to the second in 2004-2009, particularly in urban and suburban parks.*

