Our Photographers Will Shine on Dec. 1

Our meeting on December 1 will be the club’s annual “Slide Slam.”

Again, it will be a Zoom “meeting” online, with dazzling photos by our members.

Photographers wishing to participate must email Program Chairman Dave Brooke at davbrooke@gmail.com by November 17 to reserve a spot. Dave will supply you with details on how to participate. The first 12 people to contact Dave will be included in the program.

Access code 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.

Access will open at 7:00 PM to give you time to log on to Zoom. Our business meeting and announcements will begin at 7:30. The photo presentation might start earlier than 8:00 depending on the business meeting’s length.

Pittsburgh Christmas Count Will Be Held on January 1; Let’s Try for Some Goodies

By Brian Shema, Pittsburgh CBC Compiler

The Pittsburgh Christmas Bird Count will be held on January 1, 2022.

As always, the count circle will be divided among about a dozen area leaders, who help to coordinate individuals and small groups throughout the count circle.

If you would like to participate, please visit aswp.org for a list of area leaders and their information. If you are unsure of where or how to participate, please feel free to contact Brian Shema at bshema@aswp.org for additional information.

The Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania will host a Christmas Bird Count dinner on Sunday, January 2, at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve. The dinner will begin at 6:00 PM and will be followed by the area leaders sharing their respective findings for the day. ASWP will provide the entrée and beverages. Participants are asked to bring a covered dish, salad or desert to share, and will be required to wear a mask while not eating.

CURIOUS KESTREL – American Kestrels are widely distributed in our area but are more often seen in migration. Dave Brooke photographed this migrant at Harrison Hills Park in Allegheny County on September 2, 2021.

MERRY CHRISTMAS! – Steve Gosser photographed this Dark-eyed Junco in Allegheny County on Christmas Day 2020. How many will we see for the Pittsburgh CBC on January 1, 2022?
President’s Message

Mistaken Identity, or a Penguin in Florida

By Sheree Daugherty

Several years ago while camping at one of Florida’s state parks, I had an interesting conversation with a fellow camper. Always an early riser, I was out birding while most people in the campground were still asleep. Seeing my binoculars, part of the official birder’s uniform, a woman approached me and shared that she had just seen a penguin down at the spring.

A couple of things were curious about this encounter. First, the woman thought that this was perhaps unusual, but not unlikely. And, Florida is not known for its native penguins. I was pretty sure that it wasn’t a penguin, but what was it? As I walked down to the spring, I mentally ran through a list of possible candidates. I slowly approached the spring. A primordial mist was rising from the warm pool and standing at the water’s edge was an elegant Black-crowned Night-Heron! A good bird, but not the promised penguin.

I’m always happy to get tips on where to find a good bird. I can’t count the times in Florida when some helpful person tells me that there are flamingos at the end of the trail or wading in the next pond. The result has always been Roseate Spoonbills and a dozen mosquito bites. But I had to check it out, because you never know.

I’ve also been told with authority that hummingbirds have no feet and vultures are found only in Africa. It is often hard to gauge when it is worth trying to correct a person with such strong convictions. Unfortunately, it is usually a fool’s errand to attempt reeducation. Choose your battles wisely.

Often someone will ask for an identification of a bird that they’ve seen. The descriptions can be a challenge. Usually it goes something like this: “I was at Moraine State Park and saw a HUGE Blue Jay. I didn’t know that they got that big!” They are disappointed when I suggested that it was probably a Belted Kingfisher. In the same vein, a reported funny-looking robin turned out to be an Eastern Towhee and a giant goldfinch was an Evening Grosbeak. Every year someone tells me that they have a baby hummingbird coming to their flower garden. It can be hard to convince them that they had a Hummingbird Hawk-Moth instead.

Sometimes people want to know what they are hearing. Many are happy to enthusiastically reproduce the sound. I’m not sure that I’ve ever been able to help anyone with an ID, but I always enjoy their vocal efforts.

Then there is the issue of calling out a bird incorrectly while birding with others. Don’t be embarrassed. We’ve all done it! I’d rather have someone call out and misidentify a bird than have everyone miss out on what might be the sighting of the day.

I’m guilty of losing impulse control and making spectacular mistakes. Once at Bald Eagle State Park I blurted out, “Worm-eating Warbler!” when it was really a common Red-eyed Vireo. I was mercilessly teased about my “hybrid” Worm-eating Vireo by Dr Jeffery Larkin and my birding companions. The teasing did not cure me. I’ve gone on to repeat the blunder many times.

Did you know that if you stare at a distant stump long enough it will move? It’s not hard to convince yourself that the stump might be an immature Bald Eagle. Sometimes you can even convince your birding companions creating a mass hallucination.

I always appreciate the tips and enjoy checking them out. Someday I hope to find a real flamingo in Florida. I doubt that I will ever find a penguin.
Outings to Come

Thank Goodness, Our Fall Outings Are Back Again

(Editor’s note: The last issue was completed too late to let you know in The Peregrine about this fall’s first outings at Sewickley Heights Park and Harrison Hills Park.

Some of the outings below may not reach you in time for publication of the November-December issue. The outing lists are always posted much sooner on the 3RBC website. Be sure to check the website often.)

By Steve Thomas, Outings Director

We are pleased to announce that our fall outings are restarting. Below is a general statement of rules that will be followed for all our outings. Also, the leader may have specific requirements that are stated in the outing description.

It is our intention to follow the CDC and local county guidelines that are in place during the fall. We request that social distancing still be observed, and encourage people not to share equipment. The leader may have other restrictions in place and can end a walk if an uncomfortable situation arises.

Sunday, October 24 – Allegheny Cemetery: This will be a joint outing of 3RBC and the Allegheny Cemetery. Join Lisa Speranza, Historical Director / Director of Development of the Allegheny & The Homewood Cemeteries for a bird walk through the cemetery. The walk will begin at 8:30 AM at the Gate House at 4734 Butler St., Pittsburgh. Parking is available at the Gate House. The walk will last until around noon. Birders should be prepared for the weather and hilly terrain.

This outing will have a 15-person limit. Please contact Lisa by Friday, October 15, at l speranza@alleghenycemetery.com or 412-325-1961 to reserve a spot.

Saturday, October 30 – Moraine State Park, Butler County: Meet Michael David (michaeltdavid@gmail.com) at 8:30 AM at the South Shore Pleasant Valley parking area.

Directions: From I-79, take Route 422 east toward Butler and exit at the Moraine State Park exit. Turn left at the end of the ramp and travel straight into the park until you see the first large parking lot on the right with the boat ramp/dock at the end. GPS coordinates: 40.94110, -80.09234.

Waterfowl and fall migrants make this outing a highlight of the season. Allow one hour driving from Pittsburgh

Please e-mail Michael to let him know you will be attending.

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

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

Outings Revisited

We Began Our Autumn Walking Together at Last

Sewickley Heights Borough Park, August 27: This was the first 3RBC outing since early 2020 when the pandemic put an abrupt end to our outings. Was that the reason this was such an enjoyable outing, or was it the great group of eight birders who took part? Either way, it was a pleasure to be out birding with others again.

A wave of warblers hit before we left the parking lot. Several Blackburnians, a few American Redstarts, a Magnolia, and a boldly marked Black-and-white Warbler were spotted. Other warbler species were probably missed because active birds stayed high in the dense foliage. It was hard to know where to look! One birder spotted a bright orange flash deep in a grapevine tangle, and eventually a Baltimore Oriole flew out.

After the warblers moved on, we headed down the trail to the area being managed for woodcock habitat. A Northern Flicker perched in a dead snag and a brown-headed juvenile Red-bellied Woodpecker hitched up another. Several small Empidonax flycatchers were swooping for insects while an Eastern Wood-Pewee called from a hidden branch. It was a good day for Cedar Waxwings with several flocks flying overhead.

We rounded the corner to the large field and had a female Scarlet Tanager close enough to see the “tooth” on her bill.

It was already getting hot and steamy, and the bird activity slowed considerably. We botanized our way to the horse pastures and had a brief glimpse of an Eastern Bluebird there.

Trying to stay in the shade, we looped back through the woods. The birds were quiet in the heat, and only a few species were seen or heard on the way back to our cars.

We ended with 28 species including 4 warblers. Even though the count was low and the humidity became uncomfortable, it was a very enjoyable day! --by leader Sherree Daugherty

Harrison Hills Park, September 4: Our group consisted of seven people including the leader. We started with a walk to the pond. Pileated Woodpeckers seemed to be everywhere in the park

TAKING A NAP -- Common Nighthawks pass through our area in late August and early September during their long migration to wintering grounds in South America, as far as Argentina. This one was probably resting when Lauren Nagoda photographed it during our September 10 outing at Sewickley Heights Park.

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Outings Revisited

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today, and we also had White-eyed Vireo, Northern Flicker, Cedar Waxwings, Black-billed Cuckoo, and several warblers, including Nashville, Magnolia, and American Redstart. On the hike back to the parking lot, Mike Fialkovich heard the soft song of a Least Flycatcher, which everyone got to see.

Along the Creekside Trail, we got our first Yellow-billed Cuckoo, more Pileated Woodpeckers, our only Common Grackle, Eastern Wood-pewee, and several more warblers, adding Tennessee, Chestnut-sided, Blackpoll, and Black-throated Green Warblers. The trail was very muddy, and we had to crawl under a fallen tree to continue.

At the river overlook, we did spy five distant Mallards along the still muddy Allegheny River. Since we were running late, we took a quicker route back to the parking lot. We happened upon a feeding flock of Cedar Waxwings in a cherry tree. While watching these birds, we identified several more warblers and our only Scarlet Tanager.

Finally, we drove to the Environmental Center and walked the road out to the goldenrod fields. Along the way, we found a family group of Eastern Wood-pewees, five Turkey Vultures on the cell tower, two more Yellow-billed Cuckoos, and a very ragged-looking Indigo Bunting.

We finished the day with 39 species, but only seven warbler species. –by leader Jim Vallimont

Sewickley Heights Borough Park – September 10: Ten birders gathered in the parking lot on a pleasantly chilly morning and found the first warblers of the day: an American Redstart, a Blackburnian, and a Chestnut-sided. The only hawk of the day was a Cooper’s overhead.

We paused to check the sun-lit tree tops in the recently cleared area heading to the Butterfly field, where we added Nashville and Magnolia Warblers, Eastern Wood-Pewee, and a Baltimore Oriole.

At the corner of the Butterfly Field a pair of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds zipped by chasing each other, and at least one more showed up and perched for a while. A patchy blue and brown plumaged Indigo Bunting was an interesting find. Some of the birders used the Merlin app to identify an Ovenbird, a Palm Warbler, and an Acadian Flycatcher.

More warblers: Black-throated Green, Bay-breasted, and a Blackpoll actively fed in the top of an oak tree. Three or possibly four Scarlet Tanagers in their less flashy basic plumage joined the warblers. A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher swooped from a small tree repeatedly for flying insects.

At the horse pastures we were surprised to see a Double-crested Cormorant in flight while two Turkey Vultures sailed by.

Looping back to the parking area, we found a Black-and-white Warbler. A large dark bird shot across the tree-lined trail and dove into thick foliage. It made short hops from tree to tree. With patience we were finally able to see the white wing patches of a Pileated Woodpecker in flight.

The last addition to the bird list was a real treat. A photographer approached the group and asked if we would like to see a roosting Common Nighthawk. Yes, was the only acceptable answer! She led us up hill on the Pipeline Trail to a dead tree where the cryptically marked nighthawk perched out in the open.

What a find! The nightjar brought the total to 43 species for the day, which included 11 warbler species. –by leader Sheree Daugherty

Frick Park, September 12: Hello, I am Ezra White, age 9, 3RBC’s current youngest member. I participated in my first 3RBC outing (and my first community bird outing ever) at Frick Park.

One of the group’s favorite parts of the whole outing was before the walk had even started. When we were at the overlook from the Frick Environmental Center, we observed a perching Common Nighthawk in a tree high up toward the Beechwood entrance. Around the nightjar were a collection of Red-Bellied Woodpeckers, Downy Woodpeckers, American Goldfinches, and Carolina Wrens.

As we started down the path toward South Clayton West, we neared a flock of chickadees; among them, we found a skittish and very bright Blackburnian Warbler, a larger number of Chestnut-sided Warblers, male and female, in bushes near the side of the trail, and a slower-moving Tennessee Warbler, very high in a tree neighboring a Tulip Poplar with one or two miscellaneous birds of the genus Setophaga.

After we had finally gotten to the bottom of the hill and reached the South Clayton West trail, it was silent most of the way down, so instead we hiked back up a trail to the left towards the EEC, where we came upon a convenient duo of Bay-breasted Warblers along with a Swainson’s Thrush in a Locust tree.

We turned to make our way down Falls Ravine toward Riverview Trail and Blue Slide Park. As we continued down the trail, we came upon two Philadelphia Vireos lurking in a smaller tree over to the side of Falls Ravine, and once we reached the intersection of Falls Ravine, Lower and Upper Riverview, Trough, and Bench trails, we heard a Pileated Woodpecker and a Wood Thrush calling.

As we headed back to the EEC along a neighboring path, we found a flock of chickadees and titmice, along with a Lone Blue Jay. Among them was a vireo that at first we presumed was Warbling, but later, as it was bigger and more white-colored, we decided was a Red-eyed. Also, among the titmice, we found a warbler we decided was either Bay-breasted or a Blackpoll, but it continued on page 6
Observations

Humans Would Have a Hard Time Building Nests Such as These

By Tom Moeller

In the March/April 2018 edition of *The Peregrine*, I wrote about cavity nesting birds. One bird I mentioned built its own cavity in which to live – the Cliff Swallow. I’d like to take a deeper look at the Cliff Swallow in this article.

Two places I have found Cliff Swallows in western Pennsylvania are on a bridge at the Route 528 boat ramp in Moraine State Park, Butler County, and on the Fish Hatchery building in Linesville, Crawford County. The colony on the Fish Hatchery building is very large. However, whenever I visit my son’s home in Ypsilanti, Michigan, Cliff Swallows are everywhere, including a single nest above his front door. The school complex across the highway from his house is full of Cliff Swallow nests.

Cliff Swallows (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) look similar to Barn Swallows with a dark blue back and cap and a rufous throat, but they have a distinctive white forehead, hence the common name: “moon-fronted swallow.” They lack the large swallow tail of the Barn Swallow, theirs being short and flat at the end. The belly is buff from the rusty throat back, and the rump patch is a light rufous color. The legs are short. The Cliff is smaller than the Barn – only 5.5 inches long with a wing-span of 13 inches. As in all swallows, the bill is small, but the mouth is wide and opens extensively to catch insects on the wing, their main diet. They range from Alaska across Canada and down through the U.S. to Mexico in summer.

Cliff Swallows, Cave Swallows, and Barn Swallows are the three swallow species that build their nests with mud. Cliff Swallows construct the most elaborate nests of the three. They live in crowded colonies, sometimes with hundreds of nests. Cliff Swallows originally built their nests in caves or under cliffs and rocky ledges. Now they have adapted to live on human structures like the eaves of buildings, bridges, and culverts. The nest is constructed of mud or clay pellets gathered by both sexes at a nearby water source. It is in a gourd shape with an opening at the lower end facing downward. Usually the nest consists of from 900 up to 1,200 pellets. The chamber is about seven inches long with a two-inch wide, round entrance. Cliff Swallows line their cavities with grass and feathers. These birds may reuse the same nests year after year; some may be usurped by other birds, especially House Sparrows.

Cliff Swallow eggs are oval with one end larger in diameter than the other, colored white or pink with splotches of browns. They are incubated for 12 to 16 days in the cavity nests. Both parents incubate the 3 to 6 eggs, and both care for the young. The nestlings are altricial (helpless and requiring extended care by the parents). Fledglings fly around 23 days after hatching. Following their first flights, the juveniles may return to the nest for a few more days. The parents often produce two broods each year.

Cliff Swallow nests may be subject to brood parasitism, where another female swallow in a colony may enter a neighbor’s chamber and either carry in one of her eggs in her beak or lay one quickly while there. She might even toss out one of the original owner’s eggs. The average number of eggs in a clutch is 4, but larger numbers are possibly due to parasitism. Ornithologists are not sure why this happens.

Using the same nests year after year can be risky. A bug similar to the Bed Bug, called a Swallow Bug, may infest a colony.
The Peregrine

Observations
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These insects are blood-sucking parasites to adult and baby Cliff Swallows. They can reduce the number of successful fledglings in a colony by half. Some colonies may be used only every other year to avoid Swallow Bugs. The birds may check out the previous year’s nests to see if the bugs are there and move on if they are present. My son took down his single nest after the swallows left because Swallow Bugs are known to migrate into houses to find human hosts when the birds are gone.

Colonial living by Cliff Swallows has advantages. Reliable sources of food may be shared among the colony. Cliff Swallows feed over land at a higher altitude than other swallows. Gathering of mud pellets is also a community project, sharing a good water source for the pellets. That water source is also used for drinking and bathing. The swallows will glide over the water and dip their bills in to drink or quickly dive in and out of the water to bathe.

The hazards of colonial living include brood parasitism and insect parasites as described above, as well as larger predators like snakes wreaking havoc and threats to monogamy (promiscuity and forced copulation). The Cliff Swallows’ cavity nests are a deterrent to some of these problems and cowbird parasitism.

The dispersal of the Cliff Swallow is hit or miss. Favorable areas for them may be teeming with the birds, while similar areas may lack them altogether. Too much rain in spring and summer or destruction of colonies by humans* may be factors to lower numbers in an area. At the end of the season, Cliff Swallows migrate to South America, as far south as Argentina. Their nests in North America may be used by other birds as roosting spots during the winter.

Just like the ancient Egyptian stone-by-stone construction of the pyramids, the Cliff Swallows’ mud pellet-by-mud pellet construction of their nests is an architectural marvel. Hopefully you can see one of these wonders yourself.

*150 Cliff Swallow nests were removed by workers at the Pennsylvania Game Commission’s maintenance facility at Shenango River Lake in Transfer, PA in early July 2021, in spite of the birds being protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. See the article about this on the Three Rivers Birding Club Facebook page.

Outings Revisited
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moved too quickly to tell. I also found an Empid that I presumed was a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (olive-green sides, short bill, broad yellowish belly stripe, eye ring), but it flew away too quickly for anyone else to see.

Before the outing ended, we observed another Swainson’s Thrush foraging low to the ground, in a bush far out to the right of our trail. In a dead tree, we found a Northern Flicker and a juvenile American Robin sitting together on parallel branches. My father and I walked alone across the parking lot to leave Frick, we spotted a Turkey Vulture flying over, near to the ground.

We had a very successful morning. My final bird count for the outing was 26 species. –by participant Ezra White

Deer Lakes Park, September 12: Thirteen of us met on a perfect early autumn day. We quickly had birds halfway up the service road with a Swainson’s Thrush and a Black-throated Green for highlights.

We had a really nice group of birdwatchers with varying degrees of experience and lots of patience. Everyone contributed by spotting birds or helping to ID them.

We had to work to find birds for most of the day. Finally we hit a small wave of warblers around 10:30. Some of our best looks were late as we made our way back to the parking lot with a male American Redstart, a singing Hooded Warbler, a male Black-throated Blue Warbler, a close-up Black-and-white Warbler, a Least Flycatcher working from branches a foot off the ground, and a Broad-winged Hawk overhead.

We finished at 12:16 PM and covered 2.5 miles. –by leader Dave Brooke

“Return of the Bald Eagle”

Our President Sheree Daugherty has a major article in the September/October issue of Pennsylvania Magazine.

The subtitle is “Four decades after the majestic bird nearly went extinct within the state, Pennsylvania is home to a thriving eagle community.”

Long-time western Pennsylvania birders recall the era when the only nests we could see were two in Crawford County in 1980 – and we happily know the increase in our area now.

Notable Breeding Bird – Kentucky Warblers are not often confirmed as breeders in Allegheny County. Harrison Hills Park in Natrona Heights is among places known for successful nesting. This parent’s mouthful of delicates is ready for a hungry family. Dave Brooke photographed it at the park on June 10, 2021.
Birds in the Three Rivers
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were at Deer Lakes Park during the season, one of the reliable breeding locations (v.o.). A bird in Frick Park 6/9 was likely a late migrant (MK). **Worm-eating Warblers** were at a traditional site along the slopes above the Allegheny River at Harrison Hills Park throughout June (v.o.): 3 were singing 6/5 (AH, PM) and 1 was last reported 7/11 (DB). **Black-and-white Warblers** breed locally in the county and were at Harrison Hills Park in June and most of July (v.o.) and downriver a few miles at Barking Slopes where 1 was found 6/21 (RB).

**Kentucky Warbler** holds on at Harrison Hills Park, where 1 was seen and heard in June and most of July (v.o.). Breeding was confirmed there, and up to 6 birds were present 6/20 (DB). They were also at Sewickley Heights Park (eBird), another regular location. **Cerulean Warbler** is now regular only in the Sewickley area: 1 was at Sewickley Heights Park 6/4 (AZ) and 2 were at Walker Park 6/12 (MF). A late **Black-throated Blue Warbler** was at Frick Park 6/6 (KSJ).

**Prairie Warbler** continues its decline in the county. One was recorded singing at Preservation Park in Oakdale along a brushy powerline cut 6/4 (JSA). Surprisingly, 1 was seen at Imperial 7/3 in degraded habitat that formerly supported a population of this species (MV). It was seen though the month by many observers. Two were at that site 7/9 and 7/18-19 (eBird). This species still breeds in the general area just south of the border in Washington County, so these could be birds that drifted over to this site from nearby locations where they are still found regularly.

**Blue Grosbeaks** returned to Imperial for the second year in a row. An immature male was found 6/21 (MV) and again a few days later. An adult male was seen 7/18 (MV) and possibly 2 birds were present later that day. An adult male was photographed carrying food, and another bird was possibly heard chirping (MK). An adult male was seen through the season in the general area (v.o.). The bird was occupying an area that was formerly a plantation of European Larch and deciduous woods. The area was bulldozed a few years ago and is now scrub habitat, but it appears to be destroyed for expansion of an industrial park.

**Observers:** David Bennett (DBe), Christine Bossung, Dave Brooke, Ron Burkert, Michael David, Mike Fialkovich, John Flannigan, Hannah Floyd, Ted Floyd, Nathan Hall, Ashley Harold, Rebecca Hart, Amy Henrici (AH), Lisa Kaufman, Michelle Kienholz, Nick Liadis, Oliver Lindhiem, Pat Lynch, Sherron Lynch, Pat McShea, Steven Manns, Dick Nugent, Geoff Malosh, Kevin Parsons, James Saracco (JSA), Kate St. John, Brian Shema (BSh), Shannon Thompson, Ryan Tomazin, Steve Valasek (SVa), Mark Vass, John Vassallo (JVa), Sam Vassallo, Bill Wegner, Anna Zizak, various observers (v.o).

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A Pennsylvanian’s Marvelous Book

Scott Weidensaul, a prominent Pennsylvania ornithologist now living in New Hampshire, is internationally acclaimed for his recent books describing bird migration. His award-winning book *Living on the Wind* in 2000 told us more about bird migration that we ever knew.

Now in 2021 we have *A World on the Wing: The Odyssey of Migratory Birds*, a conservation-oriented array describing many species’ endangered populations ranging from migrating Spoon-billed Sandpipers in China to seabirds offshore of North Carolina.

Birders watch butterflies too, of course, and Kate St. John had an unusually close look at this little Zabulon Skipper. It was sipping on ironweed, and then it flew over to land on her thumb. Kate described the experience on August 17, 2021, in her natural history blog [birdsoutsidemywindow.org](http://birdsoutsidemywindow.org).

William R. (“Bill”) Judd of Mt. Lebanon, an unforgettable birder to those who knew him from many years, died on August 12, 2021, at the age of 86. His many memberships included 3RBC.

A memorial of Bill’s life will appear in the next issue of *The Peregrine*, and you will be amazed at his extraordinary background. We extend our condolences to his dear wife Vicky and their family.

Linda Wagner, a 3RBC and Todd Bird Club member, has a delightful essay in the October 2021 issue of *The Todd Nuthatch*. Titled “Everybody Loves Zinnias,” it tells of a late July afternoon while she watched an American Goldfinch crew feasting on zinnia seeds in her backyard.

An article containing “This particular goldfinch must be an Einstein among goldfinches!” is certainly worth reading. You’ll find it at [toddbirdclub.org/newsletters](http://toddbirdclub.org/newsletters), which is edited by 3RBC member Margaret Higbee.


There is news about one of his topics, “Lights Out Pittsburgh.” It is a voluntary program encouraging businesses to turn out their tall buildings’ unnecessary lights at night during the migration season. Night lights, particularly on upper floors, somehow attract migrants and cause them to crash onto the windows. The program is working!

Kate St. John tells us about it in the same natural history blog mentioned above. Her post on September 22, 2021, tells us about the wonderful response by many businesses. Beautiful photos and links to references are a valuable resource on this important topic.