



Lancaster County Bird Club

Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Founded December 8, 1937

... observing and preserving our community's native bird life

Call Notes

APRIL – JUNE 2022

FROM PRESIDENT BARBARA HUNSBERGER:

Spring has just arrived and at my house the tulip bulbs are already pushing up due to the few warm days we have had. Other signs include the massive snow goose migration evident at Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA), and the pairing up of birds like Canada Geese and Red-tailed Hawks. It is time to start exploring the outdoors for new arrivals. Middle Creek is a good place to go right now. Rare arrivals there include a Tufted Duck, Golden Eagle, and Bewick's Swan. Our current list of field trips will be held due to the lowering of the COVID infection rate and much higher vaccination rate. **(Please check the website or newsletter about upcoming field trips for several changes to trips due to unforeseen changes in trip leaders since the brochure was published last summer.)** Our March meeting was held in-person and we will continue this format for April, although we still recommend face coverings at the meetings. April will mark our first election since 2019 due to the pandemic. Enclosed in this issue are the nominees for election. As you will see, there will be changes made to our board and officers. I have decided that it is time for me to retire after serving 12 years as president. I have enjoyed my time in this role because of the strong support I have had from many Lancaster County Bird Club (LCBC) members. It is time for some new ideas from younger members. I am willing to remain on the board of directors, just not as an officer. Thank you so much for your support over the years and the many compliments received which has made being president of LCBC a real joy. I want to thank all our members for their support of LCBC through their contributions of their time, talents, and treasure. Thank you all and go play outside.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

LCBC ELECTION REMINDER

The election of LCBC officers and directors will be held at the April 7, 2022, meeting at the Farm & Home Center. The following are the officers up for election:

	<u>Board of Directors</u>
President – Ted Nichols II	Doug Anderson
First Vice President – Emily Broich	Carl Groff
Treasurer – Nina Wolf	Barbara Hunsberger
Secretary – Vacant	Linda Mckinne
Membership – Larry Bernhardt	Kim Morelock
Publications – Barbara Hunsberger	Jeffrey Musser
	Vince Pantanella
	Derek Stoner

PREVIEW OF COMING EVENTS

Thursday, April 7, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. – A Falcon Watch Scrapbook

Club meeting at the Farm & Home Center, 1383 Arcadia Road, Lancaster, PA at 7 p.m. **Annual election of officers and board members will be held at this meeting.**

Since 2005, Sue Hannon has been a volunteer with Harrisburg’s Falcon Watch and Rescue. Under the auspices of the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) Peregrine Falcon program and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, the Falcon Watch and Rescue monitors nesting and fledging activity at the Rachel Carson State Office Building Peregrine Falcon nest. Every year during the roughly two-week fledging period, volunteers mount a dawn to dusk watch from the lawn in front of the Carson Building, where they observe and record activity near the nest, and conduct rescues when fledglings become grounded or land in dangerous situations.

During Sue’s 17 years as a volunteer, 57 young peregrines have fledged from the 15th floor nest ledge and in that time, Sue has participated in 25 rescues, giving these young birds a second, or in some cases a third chance at life. A Falcon Watch Scrapbook tells the story of Harrisburg’s charismatic peregrine falcons through the eyes and memories of a long-time volunteer.

A Lancaster County native, Sue has lived in the Harrisburg area since 2002. Sue has also volunteered with the Ned Smith Center’s Saw-whet Owl banding program from 2005-2014. In November 2013, Sue photographed and reported a vagrant warbler at the Highspire Reservoir Park. The vagrant was identified as a MacGillivray’s Warbler, the second PA state record for a MacGillivray’s. Sue currently lives in Grantville and birds locally at H.M. Levitz Memorial Park or Memorial Lake State Park.

Saturday, April 9, 7 a.m. – Safe Harbor Park Field Trip

Kim Morelock will lead a field trip to Safe Harbor Park in search of the Yellow-throated Warbler and other early spring migrants. Meet at the Safe Harbor Park tennis court by 7 a.m. Much of the time will be spent walking through the park along the Conestoga River and Warehouse Road. The trip will end by scoping the Susquehanna River below the dam from the platform viewing area. Contact Kim at 717-471-0787, or email motherunitof5@aol.com by 6 p.m. the night before if you plan to attend.

Sunday, April 10, 6 a.m. – Memorial Lake Field Trip

Jonathan Heller will lead a field trip to Memorial Lake and surrounding area in Lebanon County for early morning displaying American Woodcock at 6 a.m. or meet at 7 a.m. to join the remainder of the trip. Meet at the Middle Road Parking lot. From Rt. 322 east of Hershey and south of Lebanon, travel north on Rt. 934 through Annville. After going under Rt. 81 and past the National Cemetery, turn left onto Asher Miner Road. Funck's Restaurant/gas station is on the right. In approximately .3 miles turn left onto Boundary Road. Do not turn left onto Memorial Lake Road, which is one-way around the west side of the lake. In about .5 miles turn left onto Middle Road, which leads to the parking lot and bathroom facilities. Target birds will be water birds on the lake and early migrants, possibly including American Bittern. There will be some walking on trails that have been very muddy over the last year so hiking boots are recommended. Please contact Jonathan (717-940-6067 or jonathan.heller@comcast.net) by 6 p.m. the night before if you plan to attend or to ask questions.

Monday, April 11, 7 a.m. – Shenk's Ferry Wildflower Preserve Field Trip

Warren and Nina Wolf will lead a field trip to Shenk's Ferry Wildflower Preserve to observe birds and the wide selection of wildflowers, including Trillium, Virginia Bluebells, and Dutchman's Britches. Participants will meet at the Safe Harbor Park Tennis Courts at 7 a.m. After a short period of birding at Safe Harbor Park we will head to Shenk's Ferry. **Trip limited to 15 club members.** Wear sturdy walking shoes and bring binoculars. If you do not own binoculars there might be a limited number available. This trail will be mostly level and well-groomed. The walk is anticipated to last 3 to 4 hours. Contact Warren and Nina at 717-284-2663 or wolfers@aol.com if you have any questions and by 6 p.m. the day before if you plan to participate.

Saturday, April 23, 8 a.m. – 1 p.m. – Safe Harbor & Chestnut Grove Field Trip

Carl Groff will lead a field trip at Safe Harbor Park and Chestnut Grove Natural Area. Meet at 8 a.m. at the Safe Harbor Park tennis courts. In Safe Harbor and Chestnut Grove, the focus will be on different habitats and "hot spots" within those areas. Some target birds include Yellow-throated Warbler, Palm Warbler, White-eyed Vireo, and Fox Sparrow. Walking will be mostly level and dry. The trip will end at Chestnut Grove by 1 p.m. Bring water and snacks. There is a porta-john at each location. Please contact Carl at 717-471-9969 or fledge19@verizon.net by 6 p.m. the previous day if you plan to attend.

Saturday, April 30, 7 a.m. – Octoraro Reservoir Field Trip

Carlton Groff will lead a field trip to the Octoraro Reservoir area. Meet at the boat launch area parking lot off Spruce Grove Road by 7 a.m. We will scope the reservoir from the shoreline area, so bring along a scope if you have one. We will take a short drive to Blue Gill Road to view the wetland area and over to Liberty Road to look for warblers and other migrant species. We will then drive two miles over to Mt. Eden Road to view the large wetland area which produces several rarities each year. There will be a 1.5-mile hike from there for anyone who wants to continue. Contact Carlton at 717-572-7708 or email groffcarlton043@gmail.com by 6 p.m. the previous day if you plan to attend.

Sunday, May 1, 7:30 a.m. – Northwest River Trail Field Trip

Warren and Nina Wolf will lead a field trip on the Northwest River Trail. Participants should plan on being at the Prescott Road Parking area at 7:30 a.m. (**Change in meeting location.**) The Prescott Road parking area is north of Bainbridge, left off of Rt. 441, across the railroad tracks and down by the Susquehanna River. In addition to birds, there is also the possibility of wildflowers in bloom. Wear sturdy walking shoes and bring binoculars. The walk is anticipated to last between 3 and 4 hours and will be on a level well-groomed trail. Contact Warren and Nina at 717-284-2663 or wolfers@aol.com if you have any questions and by 6 p.m. the day before if you plan to participate.

Saturday, May 7, 7 a.m. – Pumping Station Rd. Warbler Walk

Bruce Carl will lead the Pumping Station Rd. warbler walk. Meet at 7 a.m. at the parking lot at Rt. 322 and Pumping Station Road. The morning will be spent looking for migrants and resident birds along this popular stretch of Hammer Creek. A wide variety of birds are possible with special attention made to the warblers that use this area as their home or a brief stop-over during migration. Some other target birds will include thrushes, flycatchers, tanagers, orioles, and grosbeaks. This trip will last until around noontime so dress for the weather. Contact Bruce at (717-368-4824 or hrdabrd@gmail.com) if you have questions or by 6 p.m. on the previous day if you plan to attend.

Saturday, May 7, 7 a.m. – Chickies Rock County Park Warbler Walk

Roger Stoner will lead a field trip to Chickies Rock County Park. Meet at 7 a.m. at Breezy View Overlook along Rt. 441 just north of Columbia. After birding Breezy View, which includes a view of a Bald Eagle's nest on the York County side of the Susquehanna River, the group will proceed to the Chickies Rock Overlook parking lot and bird in the park on both sides of Rt. 441. The field trip will end in the day-use area of the park. In addition to warblers, target species include orioles, tanagers, and flycatchers. Be prepared for ticks and bring water and snacks/lunch. Contact Roger (717-393-9030) if you have questions or by 6 p.m. on the previous day if you plan to attend.

Saturday, May 7, 7 a.m. – Middle Creek WMA Warbler Walk

Doug Anderson will lead a field trip looking for spring migrants and resident species in the various habitats at Middle Creek. Good weather and good bird activity may lead to walking 2-3 miles on trails with some hills and tall grass. Hiking boots recommended, bring a hat, sunscreen, water, snacks/lunch and be prepared for ticks. Trip could last into the afternoon. Meet at the visitor center parking lot at 7 a.m. The visitor center does not open until 8 a.m. but there is a porta-john in the parking lot. Contact Doug at 717-203-2482 or douglas.anderson58@yahoo.com with questions or call by 6 p.m. the night before if you plan to attend.

Saturday, May 14, 7 a.m. – Conewago Rail Trail Field Trip

Darlene Kershner will lead this easy walking field trip west along the trail with a stop at the Hershey Trust Wetlands overlook, and then continue west with views of open fields, woodland and creeks. Walk will be out and back, probably a distance of 2-3 miles, depending on the wishes of the group. You may turn around at any time to go back to the parking lot. **Note: You can no longer park along Rt. 743. From Lancaster take Rt. 283 west to the Elizabethtown Rt. 743 exit. Turn right onto Rt. 743 towards Hershey. Go about 1/4 mile and turn right on Beverly Road. A parking area for the Conewago Trail is on the left side of the road at Old Trolley Line Park.** There is a porta-john in the parking lot. Meet Darlene at 7 a.m. in the parking lot and bring water and snacks. Please contact Darlene at 717-319-3138 or darlene.kershner@yahoo.com by 6 p.m. the night before if you plan to attend or have questions.

Sunday, May 15, 7 a.m. – Noel Dorwart Park Field Trip

Darlene Kershner and Dan and Sammy Keener will lead a field trip to Noel Dorwart Park. Please meet at 7 a.m. at the Noel Dorwart parking lot on Good Drive in East Hempfield Township. This suburban park has several different habitats with mostly groomed trails and easy walking. Target species are warblers and other spring migrants. This park has resulted in some surprising finds over the last few years. Be prepared for ticks as some of the trails are mowed grass. There is a porta-john at this location. Please contact Darlene at (717-319-3138 or Darlene.kershner@yahoo.com) by 6 p.m. the night before if you have questions or plan to attend.

Wednesday, May 18, 7:30 a.m. – Bird the Ridge Tour at Fort Indiantown Gap (FITG)

This is a tentative date – complete details will be confirmed closer to the date.

Jarrold Derr and staff will lead a field trip on the Fort Indiantown Gap Reservation in areas not open to the public. The walk will likely last all morning so be prepared with a hat, sunscreen, water, and snacks. Hiking boots are highly recommended. We will be meeting in the parking lot of the FTIG Wildlife Office on Tomstown Rd. It is a large brown building surrounded by barriers. Coordinates for the wildlife office are: 40.450141, -76.616335. You can follow the signs for Second Mountain Hawk Watch to find our building along Tomstown Rd. Yellow “Wildlife Event” signs will be out near the building, guiding you into the parking lot. We will

leave the wildlife office at 8 a.m. sharp, so please arrive more than 15 minutes early to sign paperwork. We will be walking to the birding areas from the office. Tour is rain or shine so prepare for the weather and the possibility of ticks. At this time there will not be access to facilities inside of the building because of COVID protocols. **Registration is required. Contact Barbara Hunsberger at 717-575-3712 or phunsberger@comcast.net with questions or to register for the trip.**

Saturday, May 21, 7 a.m. – Susquehannock State Park Field Trip

Tom Amico will lead a field trip to Susquehannock State Park. Meet at 7 a.m. at the Susquehanna River overlook at the far end of the park which is just past the main parking lot and senior parking area. If you have a scope, bring that out to the overlook which provides distant views of the river. We will see birds moving up and down the river, and some stopping near the overlook. We will then walk about 3/4 miles back through the park looking for late spring migrants and other birds which nest in the park. Contact Tom Amico at 717-419-4208 or email tamico@comcast.net if you plan to attend.

Saturday, May 21, 7 a.m. – Birding in Juniata County

Carl Groff will lead a field trip to Juniata County for spring warblers and other migrants. Target species include both Golden-winged and Blue-winged Warblers. This trip covers several areas of the county. The **group is limited to 12 club members and registration is required.** We will be meeting at 7 a.m. at Karl B. Guss Picnic Area along East Licking Creek Rd. Participants are welcome to drive to the location Saturday morning or get a motel in the area Friday night. Bring water, snacks, and lunch and be prepared at times to walk on rough and hilly terrain. Contact Carl at fledge19@verizon.net or 717-471-9969 if you have questions or want to make a reservation to attend.

Sunday, June 26, 7 a.m. – Ferncliff Preserve & Bald Eagle Road Field Trip

Ted Nichols and Emily Broich will lead a field trip exploring Lancaster Conservancy's Ferncliff Preserve and nearby Eagle Road checking out Lancaster County's prime birding habitat. Meet at 7 a.m. at the main parking lot for Ferncliff Preserve located on Wildlife Preserve Road, Drumore. Please contact Ted at 717-856-3851 or tanicholsii@gmail.com by 6 p.m. the day before if you plan to attend or have questions.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS BY LARRY BERNHARDT

The LCBC would like to welcome the new members, listed below, who joined during the last quarter.

The LCBC membership continues to rebound from the 70-member loss during the shutdown. We currently have 323 members which is only nine less than the membership during the 2019-2020 membership year. We are also very sorry for the loss of three members this year who passed away recently.

NEW MEMBERS:

Jim & Susan Crooks, Lititz
Erin Deneke, Birdsboro
Barbara Gee, Willow Street
Martin & Joanna Gregory, Lancaster

Julie Schulz, Lancaster
Jerry & Frances Skolnick, Lancaster
Susan Wheeler, Middletown

RETURNING MEMBER

Terry Brown, Lancaster

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS:

In Memory of Jan Witmer

Beth L. Morrison
Leon E. & Jane S. Schreffler

Forest Garden Access (\$4,625 to date)

Charles & Mary Blakinger	Beth L. Morrison
Michael & Pamela Holmes	Larry & Sandy Roda
Brenda E. Keener	Rose & Michael Shull

LCBC extends its appreciation to all who have contributed to the Forest Garden Access Fund especially the \$1000 donation by Rose and Michael Shull.

In Memoriam

Jan A. Witmer of Ephrata was an active member of LCBC for more than 40 years. He held many positions in the club including president, vice president, board member, newsletter editor, trip leader, and presented many programs at club meetings. Jan and his wife Pat were awarded life memberships in LCBC by the board of directors on April 10, 2015, for their many years of exceptional service. He had seen over 680 species of birds while traveling within the United States and Canada.

Jan was a graduate of Ephrata High School, Millersville State Teachers College and Temple University. During his 35 years at Ephrata High School, he taught math, social studies, and driver's education. He coached many sports while at Ephrata, but most notably was known as a basketball coach for both boys' and girls' basketball teams. Jan coached several of these teams to both county and district championships. The last 10 years of his career Jan was director of student activities and athletic director.

Jan, who was 85, passed away on Thursday, January 20, 2022, at Fairmount Homes after a lengthy illness. He was the husband of Patricia (Palsgrove) Witmer with whom he shared more than 66 wonderful years of marriage. In addition to his wife, Jan is survived by a son, J. Eric, husband of Robin Witmer of Ephrata; a grand-daughter, Melissa, wife of Russell Pannebecker of Stevens; three great-grandchildren, Dylan, Riley, Leah; a brother, J. Ronald Witmer of Ephrata; many nieces and nephews, and a grand dog, Daffy.

LCBC extends its sympathy to Pat, his son Eric, granddaughter Melissa, as well as Jan's entire family.

In Memoriam

Antoinette “Toni” Willwerth, 89, formerly of Ephrata, passed away at Tower Health Hospital in Reading on Monday, February 7, 2022, after a brief illness. She was the widow of the late Dr. James W. Willwerth.

Toni held a bachelor’s degree from Kutztown University and was a kindergarten teacher. Toni enjoyed birding, genealogy, quilting, playing bridge, and was an avid bike rider. She volunteered at the Ephrata Public Library for 42 years and was a member of the Embroidery Guild. Toni was a member of LCBC for 40 years from 1975 to 2015.

She is survived by 3 children: James M. Willwerth of Reading, Thomas W. Willwerth of Allen, TX and Anne M. Zee of Silver Spring, MD.

LCBC extends its sympathy to her children and extended family members.

In Memoriam

James Henry Smith and his wife, Rita, have been members of the LCBC from 1996 to 2022. Jim was on the board of directors from 2004 to 2014. He led many field trips and was knowledgeable about birds, wildflowers, and butterflies. He was most content when walking in the woods and watching the birds. They completed their “bucket list” of finding over 500 species of birds while traveling across the country.

Jim passed away on February 15, 2022, surrounded by his family. He was the loving husband of Rita for almost 60 years.

Jim graduated from J. P. McCaskey High School in 1949 and earned a B.S. in Biology from Franklin & Marshall College in 1953. In 1964 he earned a master’s degree in science education from the University of Delaware. He taught at Solanco High School.

Jim is survived by Rita, daughter Sally Armstrong and son James Jr. He had 7 grandchildren, a brother, 2 nephews, and 2 grandnieces.

LCBC extends its sympathy to Rita and his entire family.

LANCASTER COUNTY BIRD OBSERVATIONS – Winter 2021

Zach Millen is unable to provide the winter 2021 report due to more important events in his life - having a baby the end of March. LCBC sends its “Best Wishes” to the Millens.

LCBC HISTORY

The following list of Lancaster County Bird Club presidents was compiled by Leon Schreffler.

1937-38	Carl L. Fasnacht	1965-68	William Yeager
1938-40	Ray Beasley	1968-72	J. E. Russell Markert
1940-41	William Light	1972-76	Harold B. Morrin
1941-42	Carl L. Fasnacht	1976-79	Jan A. Witmer
1942-44	Barton Sharp	1979-80	Shirley Bubb
1944-45	Fuhrman F. Bailey	1980-84	Robert M. Schutsky
1945-46	Martin Stapleton	1984-85	Harold B. Morrin
1946-47	Kenneth D. Corbett	1985-87	Jay R. George
1947-48	H. Raymond Woerner	1987-88	Stephen R. Rannels
1948-49	Henry C. Brown, Jr.	1988-89	Jay R. George
1949-50	Kenneth D. Corbett	1989-92	Barbara Warren
1950-52	Lloyd V. Hassel	1992-94	W. Edward Pederson
1952-53	Kenneth D. Corbett	1994-99	Shirley Bubb
1953-54	John R. Maddox	1999-03	Jane Schreffler
1954-57	Lewis C. Spencer	2003-05	Jan A. Witmer
1957-60	Robert W. Stevenson	2005-10	Ann Bodling
1960-65	Vernon L. Browne	2010-22	Barbara Hunsberger

BIRDS ON THE MOVE

For those members who may not use online resources to share their significant bird sightings or like to see their sightings in print, LCBC would like to continue to allow members to share their recent significant sightings through our newsletter.

Each member is asked to put their sightings into a narrative format (descriptive sentences) that tell the who, what, where, when, why, and how of their sightings.

Each member is asked to limit their submission to four to 10 sentences for printing in each edition of the newsletter.

Sightings can be submitted by email or paper to:
Carol Feister
225 Spencer Ave., Lancaster, PA 17603-4929
cjfeister@comcast.net

Keep in mind, the newsletter is printed only four times a year. **The deadline for submission of observations for this column for the Summer Newsletter is June 17, 2022.**

Submissions made for this column should be made by the deadline date and be for observations that occurred after the previous deadline date (March 15, 2022) and before the current deadline. The “Birds on the Move” column editor or “Call Notes” newsletter editor reserves the right to edit submissions based on newsletter space constraints.

SOUTHERN LANCASTER COUNTY CBC by Bob Schutsky

The Southern Lancaster County Christmas Bird Count was conducted on Sunday, December 19, 2021. There was rain early in the day, followed by strong, gusty winds later in the day. These two factors almost certainly contributed to a rather low species count. A total of 85 species were found, compared to an average of 102. Thanks to all the birders who participated in this year’s CBC, either in the field or watching their feeders.

During the history of the count which was initiated in 1976, 177 species have been tallied, which includes a number of rarities. This year a Broad-winged Hawk was added to this total. This is an exceedingly rare species anywhere in the northeastern U.S. in December. Two Sandhill Cranes had been seen off and on at Octoraro Lake since November, but unfortunately could not be found on the day of the count.

An adult Lesser Black-backed Gull was seen on the lower Susquehanna River near Peach Bottom. This species has become somewhat regular in the past two decades. A record high count of 527 Black Vultures was observed. The previous high was 431 in 2012. Both of these totals are exceptional. All three expected species of falcon were observed, including two Peregrines and one Merlin. Six Common Ravens were seen. They have now been found every year except one since 2011. This species was never observed on any count previous to that. They are definitely expanding their range. A flock of eight Snow Buntings is always a nice surprise.

Killdeer and Common Snipe are almost always observed, but not this year. Ring-necked Pheasant was also missed. However, most of the pheasants that have been seen in recent years were very likely to have been birds that were stocked for hunting. Only 600 Common Grackles and very few Red-winged Blackbirds or Brown-headed Cowbirds were observed. None of the massive flocks of blackbirds which are sometimes seen could be found. These flocks can number in the tens of thousands or even higher in some years.

Review of Lancaster CBC 2021 by Barbara Hunsberger

The Lancaster Christmas Bird Count occurred on January 2, 2022, with 60 volunteers in the field and 12 feeder watchers reporting from home. The total number of species reported was 88. Highlights of the event included 12 species of ducks: 3 Canvasbacks and 1 Common

Loon. It turned out to be a good day for hawks and eagles including 38 Bald Eagles, 1 Northern Harrier and 10 Red-shouldered. Three species of owls included Eastern Screech Owl, Barred Owl (one each) and 12 Great Horned Owls. Other sightings of interest were 1 each of Eastern Phoebe and Red-breasted Nuthatch and Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, 19 Yellow-rumped Warblers, and 10 species of sparrows. Many thanks to all the volunteers for a successful CBC. Hope to see you next year.

Bald Eagle Lifts Off With Prey by Meredith Lombard

On Monday, January 24, 2022, Meredith Lombard was birding at Middle Creek WMA and captured the action in a great video. A bald eagle separated a duck from a flock and repeatedly made it dive while, in flight, the predator swept back and forth over the area where the duck was trapped. Each time the eagle swept toward the duck it dove underwater for protection. Eventually though, the duck tired before the eagle did and didn't dive quite deeply enough. The eagle, ever keen, pounced on the sub-surface duck and ended the standoff.

Winter Raptor Survey in Lancaster County by Frank Haas

The Winter Raptor Survey (WRS) in Pennsylvania was started in 2001. It is part of a continent-wide effort to monitor the distribution and abundance of raptors during the dead of winter (Jan 14 - Feb 12). It is coordinated statewide by Greg Grove.

Survey routes are set up by individual birders and usually consist of a linear or looping course that traverses habitat conducive to wintering raptors – especially open areas. The routes try to avoid high-speed and high-traffic roads. They can be as short as 20 miles or as long as 70 miles. Most are in the 40-mile range and take 3 to 4 hours to complete. They are run in the middle of the day, usually starting around 10 a.m. so the birds have had a chance to warm up and get active.

By using the maps and route descriptions on the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology (PSO) website (<https://pabirds.org/index.php/projects/winter-raptor-survey-wrs>), birders can see where routes already exist and design their route so as not to overlap existing routes.

The survey consists of driving slowly (without impeding other traffic) and identifying and counting all raptors observed (including vultures). Where possible, age/sex data is recorded. The same routes are driven each year, except where weather conditions or road construction necessitate detours. This year (2022) eight of the nine Lancaster County routes were run (see map).

Results are published annually in *Pennsylvania Birds*.

Ten species of raptors were seen totaling 1210 individual birds.

The observers drove 414 miles and spent about 29 man-hours.

The totals were as follows:

153	Black Vulture
838	Turkey Vulture
63	Bald Eagle
6	Northern Harrier
7	Cooper's Hawk
3	Red-shouldered Hawk
113	Red-tailed Hawk
24	American Kestrel
1	Merlin
2	Peregrine Falcon

These surveys are very easy and enjoyable to run. You don't have to get out of your car, unless you have to set up a scope to view a particularly difficult-to-identify or distant bird (I use a window-mounted scope, so I rarely have to use my tripod).

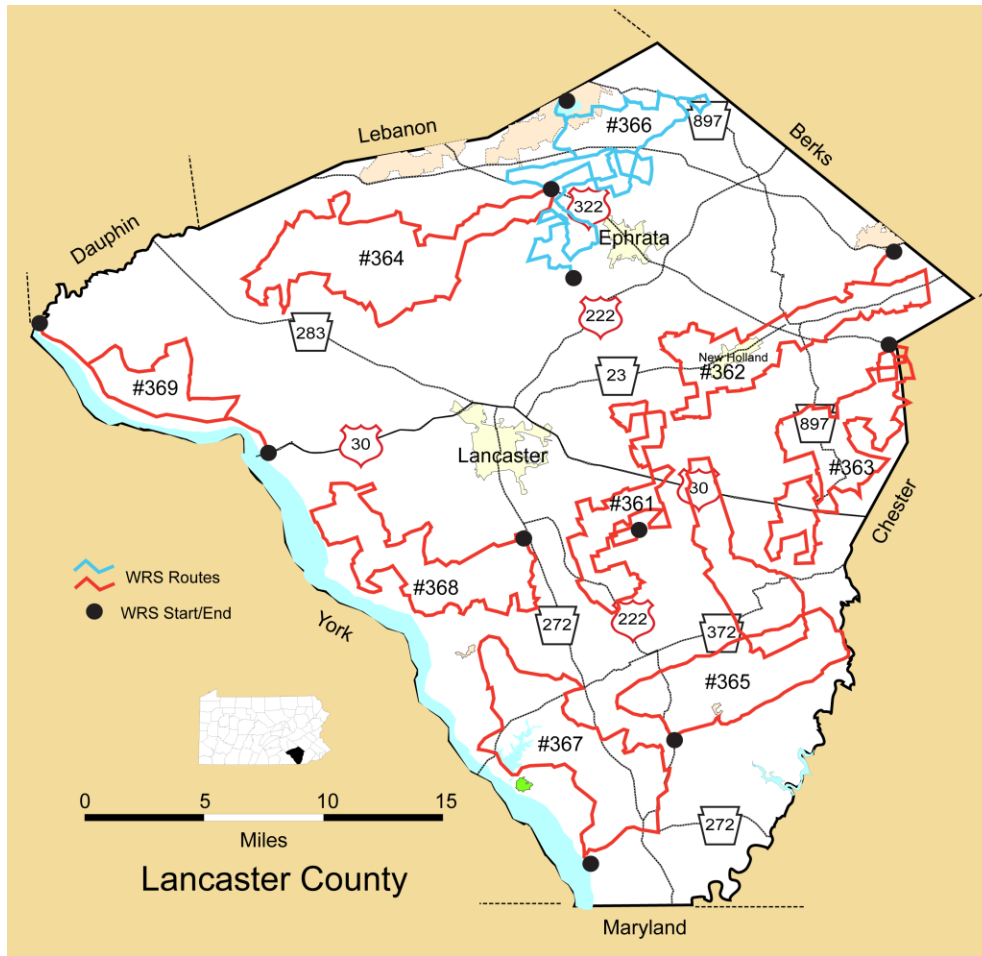
You select the day and time (lots of flexibility in the month-long survey period).

You don't have to beat-the-bushes for those rarities or lingerers like on the Christmas counts or other endeavors. You just count what's visible from the road.

I have three routes (362, 363, and 364) that my wife and I ran until she died in 2020. Last year I did them alone (for obvious reasons), but this year Barbara Hunsberger joined me. We also ran #367 this year when the regular observer was indisposed.

You can see from the map that there could still be another route or two established in Lancaster County.

If interested, contact Greg Grove at gwg2@psu.edu.



REVIEW OF COMPLETED EVENTS

January 13, 2022 – The LCBC monthly meeting was cancelled due to COVID-19. The program topic was to be an Update on Lancaster Conservancy & Falmouth Forest Garden.

January 22, 2022 - Emily Broich and 11 participants observed a total of 32 species on a field trip to East Donegal Riverfront Park. Sunshine and minimal wind helped bird activity despite the frigid 15-degree weather. On the river, the group enjoyed good views of a Bufflehead close to shore, several Common Mergansers, and a pair of Bald Eagles. Other birds seen throughout the park included Killdeer, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, several Eastern Bluebirds, and Yellow-rumped Warbler.

January 29, 2022 – The beginner birder trip to Safe Harbor and Observation Road was cancelled due to the weather.

February 10, 2022 - In lieu of an in-person club meeting, Dr. Mike Moore presented a Zoom presentation describing sparrow identification. Dr. Moore is a recent retiree from the University of Delaware where he taught biology for 12 years. Prior to his move to Delaware, he was on the faculty of the Arizona State University for 27 years. Dr. Moore has published nearly 100 papers in scientific journals on behavior and hormones of birds and reptiles. Dr. Moore started birding at 11 years old in Massachusetts and has pursued it with a special interest in identification challenges and chasing rarities.

In his presentation, he described using the Peterson System which uses critical field marks versus the GISS (General Impression of Size & Shape) which is more accurate than field marks. However, GISS is learned over time and is not taught. It uses the region of the brain that allows us to recognize human faces. He stressed to linger over identified birds. That is, if a bird has been accurately identified, then study its features, size, bill shape/color, etc. Birders usually start with field marks and then progress to GISS. Several sparrows in the Passerellidae Family were then described and compared, noting specific features of each bird that would identify them.

March 5, 2022 – Craig Boyhont and Joe Wolf led a small group of five birders on a late winter trip to Middle Creek WMA. The group observed 38 species but no rarities according to Craig. Perhaps the “rarest” waterfowl was a drake Canvasback. Searches for the Tufted Duck on the main lake and two ponds came up short. The Hooded Mergansers were putting on courtship displays at the visitor center pond and gave the group excellent looks. Also, some Common Mergansers on that pond afforded good close looks that most observers don’t typically get to see. The two ponds at the white shed offered a bonanza of ducks such as Bufflehead, American Pintail, American Wigeon, Northern Shoveler, Ring-necked, Wood, Lesser Scaup, American Black, and Green-winged Teal. Just as the group was wrapping up its session, a male American Kestrel did a nice flyby in front of the birders.

March 5, 2022 – Roger and Derek Stoner, along with John Lahr, led a group of nine beginner birders to Middle Creek WMA on a cloudy and windy 50-degree day where they saw 14 species. Highlights of the day were American Wigeon, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal and Ring-necked Duck. These were seen by most of the participants. During this time the WMA was estimating 78,000 Snow Geese, 6,000 Tundra Swan, and 200 Canada Geese were “visiting” the Middle Creek Lake. Birders who remained in the cold wind and fading light were rewarded with distant views of a Short-eared Owl and a close flyover by an American Woodcock.

March 10, 2022 – In its first public meeting since December 2021, LCBC presented the husband/wife team of Lauren and Steve Ferreri who spoke about the history of the 6,000 plus acre wildlife area, Middle Creek WMA. While the history and creation of the 400-acre manmade Middle Creek Lake began because of Canada Goose management, the WMA is home to many other species of wildlife besides birds. Next year this area will be celebrating its fiftieth anniversary. Middle Creek is also home to the PGC’s only visitor center which approximately 150,000 visitors frequent every year to learn about wild birds and wildlife management. In February 2022 over 68,000 visitors came through the recently reopened and renovated visitor center.

Lauren explained how Middle Creek grew at its beginning in the 1960s. Land was purchased through land grants and bond issues to establish an area for hunting geese for hunters in the southeastern part of the state. Land was purchased from homeowners who lived in the area. Some were happy with what was happening, and some were not. Eminent domain procedures were used to acquire some of these properties. A dam was built nearby which got things rolling. Thirty pairs of geese were brought in to establish a resident goose population. Lauren said, “if you build it they will come.”

Middle Creek is a hub for snow geese, she said. The lake holds about 250,000 birds maximum. But water is not the only thing that birds need. They also need a place for food and Middle Creek has acres of land for their needs. The PGC works hard on habitat management and focuses on timing plant growth with bird migration. PGC must monitor wet soil management, keep a keen eye on what plants are germinating, and ensure that something is in bloom throughout the year. Middle Creek WMA is now one of the top five birding hotspots in Pennsylvania.

Lauren graduated from Delaware Valley University and majored in Wildlife Management and Conservation. She has been with the PGC for 10 years and with Middle Creek for six years. She manages Middle Creek’s controlled hunt, biological activities, and visitor experience. Steve, who has a bachelor’s degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Science from Penn State, has worked with the PGC fulltime since 2010. He is the land manager in Lancaster and Chester counties which includes Middle Creek WMA.

March 12, 2022 -The late afternoon field trip to Middle Creek WMA for American Woodcock and Short-eared Owl was cancelled due to the weather.

If you have any questions regarding items in the newsletter, Club meetings/programs, or field trips, please feel free to contact a member of the Board of Directors. For your convenience, their names and telephone numbers are listed below:

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