



Lancaster County Bird Club

Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Founded December 8, 1937

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

Call Notes

JANUARY - MARCH 2025

President's Perch

As I pen this, we just got out of what for the most part was a seasonally warm December with three successful club-sponsored CBCs completed and an introductory event held with Lancaster County Parks to introduce people of all ages to the wonderful world of Christmas Bird Counts. Thanks to everyone who gives their time to contribute to our counts and on a larger scale what is North America's longest-running Citizen Science Project.

The Lititz CBC held on Dec. 29 saw a recorded high temperature of 65 degrees at Lancaster Airport – my car read 66 at Middle Creek at one point! Despite the balmy temperature, most small bodies of water were still mostly iced over and the lake at Middle Creek was about 80 percent iced over. Despite all that, we're back to cold temperatures and anticipating the first plowable snow of the season during the first full week of January in 2025 – conveniently aligned with Farm Show week in Southcentral Pennsylvania. We have already had a few minor dustings that have brought out some of the specialties of the season like Horned Larks, Snow Buntings and Lapland Longspurs – birds that otherwise can go unnoticed in agricultural fields but the snow can bring to roadside and exposed areas of the landscape.

Our 2025 membership renewal process is now underway online and in the coming days hard-copy renewals along with our 2025 program brochure will be mailed out to all members. If you have already renewed online or submitted payment by mail prior to the mailing, please simply disregard the renewal form in your mailing, but please read the accompanying letter that provides an overview of 2024 accomplishments and make sure to hold onto the coveted 2025 program brochure included. In short, our membership has grown tremendously over 2024 and brought us to our highest levels since the early 2000s. Each of you are to thank for that and I'd like to personally thank you for continuing to support the club and our mission. We certainly couldn't do it without you. Each of you are also the best ambassadors we have when it comes to

creating awareness about the club and growing our membership, so please continue to spread the word.

We have a full schedule planned for 2025 with field trips scheduled at a minimum every single month – many months have multiple trips being held each weekend – and meetings again being held EVERY month of the year. Look for everything in the 2025 program brochure that will soon be in your mailbox. Complete details on events through our April 2025 meeting are within this newsletter and also always available on the “Events” section of our website. The website calendar is updated seasonally in conjunction with the newsletter to cover upcoming events. As far as meeting locations for 2025, due to planned construction at Climbers Run, we will split our meetings between just two locations this year – the North Museum and Middle Creek. It’s always great to see the different faces each meeting location brings out as well as the familiar faces that are trademarks of most of our meetings. If you’re not a regular meeting attendee, please make it a point to at least pick one meeting this year to attend. We really have some GREAT programs scheduled and they do reflect an investment from our budget each year to showcase the board’s commitment to making quality programs available for the enjoyment of our membership and the general public. The meetings are also great opportunities for camaraderie, sharing recent birding stories with fellow members and making friends for your next time out in the field.

Whether it’s watching your feeders from inside or getting out in the field and trekking on the winter landscape, enjoy the hearty birds of winter!

Ted Nichols II
President – Lancaster County Bird Club (LCBC)

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

LCBC Membership Renewals for 2025 are IN PROCESS!

LCBC Membership Renewals for 2025 are IN PROCESS! You should soon receive a mailing at your home from the club containing the membership renewal form for 2025 as well as our program brochure for 2025. You also will receive these files via e-mail if your email address is updated with the club. We kindly ask all members to send their renewals in by February 15, 2025, so we can have our membership list updated for 2025 and accurately project our finances.

Memberships (new or renewals) can also now be completed online on the club website at www.lancasterbirdclub.org. Just click on “Join or Renew Membership” from the website menu. Online membership renewals offer convenience to you as well as an opportunity to pay with a credit card. If you prefer to pay in person, feel free to bring your renewal to our January or February club meeting at the North Museum.

If you have already renewed online or submitted payment by mail prior to the mailing, please simply disregard the renewal form in your mailing, but please read the accompanying letter that

provides an overview of 2024 accomplishments and make sure to hold onto the coveted 2025 program brochure included.

PROPOSED BYLAWS UPDATE

As approved at our Fall 2024 Board Meeting, one bylaws amendment was approved to bring to the membership for acceptance. The first reading of this proposed amendment will occur at the Jan. 9, 2025, club meeting. A second reading of the amendment as well as a vote to accept it will be held at the Feb. 13, 2025, club meeting.

Summary:

Amend Article 6 Section 2

Change from:

“Section 2 – Fiscal Year: The fiscal year of this Corporation will be from May 1 to April 30.”

Change to:

“Section 2 – Fiscal Year: The fiscal year of this Corporation will be from January 1 to December 31.”

Explanation of change:

The club previously approved bylaws / operating changes to change our program / membership year to coincide with the calendar year. The board feels it is imperative our fiscal year should also coincide with the calendar / membership year. The board also approved shifting our elections to being held at our December club meeting going forward so the terms of board members align with our operating year. It should be noted the election change does not require a bylaws amendment as our bylaws only specify elections must be done at an annual meeting.

LCBC NOMINATIONS & ELECTION NOTICE

The election of LCBC officers and directors will be held at the April 10, 2025, meeting at 7 p.m. at the Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA) Visitor Center. Jeff Musser has once again agreed to chair the Nominating Committee. Please contact him at jmusser1956@gmail.com or (717-471-2032) if you would like to nominate someone, including yourself, for election to the LCBC Board of Directors or as an officer. The officer position of secretary is expected to become vacant and is a priority for filling for the organization. On top of a vote on the board, the requirement to take minutes at our one board meeting a year is also a duty of the position.

Special Note: The club’s bylaws do not specify a month our elections must be held other than it must be done at an annual meeting. As approved at our Fall 2024 Board Meeting, the terms for those elected in April 2025 will expire Dec. 31, 2025. We will hold elections for 2026 at the club’s Dec. 11, 2025, meeting. Future years will also feature elections being held in December with terms running January 1 through December 31. This change is being made so our terms coincide with our operating / membership / fiscal year.

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

We have removed the “Birds on the Move” section of the newsletter as no articles have been received from members for the past several newsletters. Also, you will notice that there are no “Member Adventures” either. Birders do travel, please consider sending in a report for your birding adventures and interesting bird sightings. Others may be interested in visiting your new-found birding location.

Articles should be sent to Carol Feister (cfeister@comcast.net) by April 4, 2025, to be included in the next newsletter. Thank you!

PREVIEW OF COMING EVENTS

Thursday, January 9, 2025, 7 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. – Monthly Club Meeting - “Avian Conservation in an Urbanized Fragmented Landscape: Evolving Techniques and Developing Partnerships” with Dan Ardia, Franklin & Marshall College

Location: North Museum of Nature and Science, 400 College Ave, Lancaster, PA 17603

Bird populations face increasing threats from rapid environmental change and human impacts on the landscape. The talk will use Lancaster as a case study for how to study and conserve birds in our fragmented and urbanized landscape. Results from existing research will be combined with describing new approaches to monitor birds in Lancaster and beyond.

Dan Ardia is a Professor of Biology at Franklin & Marshall College. He has been studying the effects of rapid environmental change on birds across the world and in Lancaster. Dan serves the ornithological community as the Board Chair of Avinet Research Supplies and a Past President of the Association of Field Ornithologists. He is also active in local conservation efforts as a member of the Board of Directors of Lancaster Conservancy and PA Master Naturalist.

Saturday, January 18, 2025, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. – Riverfront Park Field Trip

Location: Riverfront Park Pavilion, 551 Vinegar Ferry Road, Marietta, PA

Contact: Emily Broich (717) 333-9146 or emilybroich@gmail.com

Emily Broich will lead a field trip to Riverfront Park (north of Marietta). Meet at 10 a.m. at the park's main parking lot near the pavilion and boat launch off Vinegar Ferry Road. Dress warmly to scan the river for mergansers and winter waterfowl. We will walk a short distance to look for other winter visitors among the trees including Ruby and Golden-crowned Kinglets, Brown Creeper, and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Please register by 6 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 16 if you

would like to attend. Registration allows us to relay cancellation information should there be a need to cancel due to winter weather

Saturday, January 25, 2025, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. - Beginner Birder Trip – Safe Harbor Dam & Observation Site Road

Location: Safe Harbor Dam & Observation Road, 1 Powerhouse Rd, Conestoga, PA

Contact: Sarah Gotwols (717) 940-3804 or sarahann71880@gmail.com

Sarah Gotwols will lead a field trip to Safe Harbor Dam and Observation Site Road for beginner birders or for individuals who would like to experience birding for the first time. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Safe Harbor Dam parking lot. Target species include waterfowl, Bald Eagles, other raptors and winter migrants. These special walks are meant to introduce new birders to the hobby, including bird identification, binocular use and mobile apps. Birders of all experience levels are welcome. Contact Sarah Gotwols (717-940-3804 or sarahann71880@gmail.com) by 6 p.m. the day before if you plan to attend or have any questions.

Use GPS coordinates (39.9251787, -76.3857431) for the most accurate directions to this location.

Saturday, February 8, 2025, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. - Riverwatch for Waterfowl and Gulls at Columbia Crossing River Trails Center

Location: Columbia Crossing River Trails Center, 41 Walnut Street, Columbia, PA

Contact: Ted Nichols (717) 856-3851 or tanicholsii@gmail.com

Join LCBC President Ted Nichols and other members of the club to experience winter birding on the Susquehanna River and get some scope views of some of the different species of waterfowl and gulls that spend their winter on the Susquehanna in Lancaster County. Members will have spotting scopes set up under the main porch pavilion and will be on deck to help with identification and answer birding questions. Light refreshments will be available to attendees in addition to general information on the club and birding. This event is held in collaboration with the Columbia Crossing River Trails Center that is managed by the Susquehanna Natural Heritage Area for the Borough of Columbia. No registration is necessary for this offering. Contact Ted Nichols at (717) 856-3851 or tanicholsii@gmail.com with any questions.

Thursday, February 13, 2025, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. - Monthly Club Meeting – Exploring the North Museum's Ornithology Collection & Member Social with Refreshments!

Location: North Museum of Nature and Science, 400 College Ave, Lancaster, PA

Join us for this unique once-a-year social opportunity that features refreshments and an opportunity to explore the North Museum and their world-class ornithological collection. There is no cost for the evening and light refreshments will be provided for all attendees. The evening will start out with a short welcome and update from leadership from the North Museum. Attendees will then have the opportunity to explore the entire museum and enjoy the museum's ornithological collection at their leisure. New this year is the opportunity to view the new *Shallow Seas* temporary exhibit that opened in June 2024 and invites visitors to explore three distinct marine environments around the Atlantic Ocean. Museum staff and members of the museum are also invited to join us for this event!

Saturday, February 22, 2025, 8 a.m. - 11 a.m. – Field Trip to Middle Creek WMA – Waterfowl and More!

Location: Stop 1 at Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area, 100 Museum Road, Stevens, PA

Contact: Craig Boyhont (717-368-5986 or cboyhont@gmail.com)

Craig Boyhont will lead this late winter field trip to Middle Creek WMA. Meet at 8 a.m. at Stop No. 1 along Kleinfeltersville Road between the museum pond and the main lake. Waterfowl will be the target species on this trip and there should be plenty to see. We will bird into the early afternoon so bring along any snacks/food/drinks and dress for the weather. The group will view the lake from different areas and look at various ponds and wet areas with the possibility of finding 12-20 species here on a single day to go along with the many thousands of Snow Geese staging at this time of year. It is a great time to be at Middle Creek. Some of the target birds include Bald Eagles, Northern Harriers, Ross's Goose, Greater White-fronted Goose and hopefully some early spring migrants or an early morning American Woodcock. Restrooms are available at the Visitor Center. Please contact Craig (717-368-5986 or cboyhont@gmail.com) by 6 p.m. the day before if you plan to attend or have questions.

Saturday, March 1, 2025, 3 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. - Beginner Birder Trip to Middle Creek WMA

Location: Middle Creek WMA Visitor Center, 100 Museum Road, Stevens, PA

Contact: Sarah Gotwols 717-940-3804 (call/text) or sarahann71880@gmail.com

Beginner Birder field trip to Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area for individuals who would like to experience birding for the first time or who would like to further their birding

observation skills. We will meet at the Visitors Center and introduce attendees to the many species of birds that gather at Middle Creek during this time of the year, including waterfowl and raptors. The group will also search for Short-eared Owls that often winter at this location at dusk. Visitor Center facilities are only available until 4 p.m., porta potties are also available onsite. Contact Sarah (717-940-3804 call/text or sarahann71880@gmail.com) by 6 p.m. on Friday if you plan to attend. If necessary, weather-related cancellations will be made by noon the day of the trip and registered participants will be notified.

Saturday, March 8, 2025, 4:30 p.m. - 6 p.m. - Woodcock & Waterfowl at Middle Creek WMA Field Trip

Location: Middle Creek WMA Visitor Center, 100 Museum Road, Stevens, PA,

Contact: John Lahr 717-205-3030 or johnlahr324@gmail.com

John Lahr will lead a late afternoon and evening field trip to Middle Creek WMA for woodcock and waterfowl. The main objective of this trip will be to hear and/or view the courtship display of the American Woodcock. The group will visit an area where there is an opportunity to hear and view this unique event. Some of the time before dusk will be spent scanning the lake and surrounding habitat for waterfowl and other birds that might be in the area. Winter visitors may include Short-eared Owls and Northern Harriers. Meet at the visitor center parking area at 4:30 p.m. Visitor center facilities are only available until 4 p.m., porta potties are also available onsite. Contact John (717-205-3030 or johnlahr324@gmail.com) by 6 p.m. on Friday if you plan to attend or have questions. If necessary, weather-related cancellations will be made by noon the day of the trip and registered participants will be notified.

Thursday, March 13, 2025, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. - Monthly Club Meeting – “Bird Town Pennsylvania: Creating Livable Communities Through the Lives of Birds”

Location: North Museum of Nature and Science, 400 College Ave, Lancaster, PA 17603

Presented by Heidi Shiver, Bird Town Pennsylvania LLC

Come join us to learn more about the state-wide grassroots conservation program, ***Bird Town Pennsylvania***, and how it works with municipalities to engage, educate and empower their residents, schools, and businesses to make more positive ecologically friendly decisions that especially support birds and wildlife. Tools and resources available to engage homeowners from Backyard Habitat Programs to Community Science Programs will be shared as well as impactful municipal and community projects including creating Native Plant Pop-up Gardens to Native Plant Garden Tours to Demonstration Gardens and more.

Heidi Shiver was a member of Bucks Audubon's Board and also served as Board President, helping to create their advocacy committee, establishing renewable energy as a focus and created and led their book club for 6 years. Currently, she serves on Doylestown Township's Environmental Advisory Council (over 6 years) and coordinates their Bird Town Program and starting in 2025 will be the Environmental Advocacy Council Chair. She continues as a Bucks County Penn State Master Gardener for over 17 years. Heidi also serves on the Executive Committee of the Pennsylvania Audubon Council. She is also helping with managing, writing and editing for the 2nd edition of *Birds of Bucks County*, to be published shortly. For the past 3 years, Heidi has served as the President of Bird Town Pennsylvania, working intensely with their Board to reinvigorate, to strengthen and to grow the program across the state and promote community-based conservation actions to create a healthier and sustainable environment for birds, wildlife and people.

Saturday, March 15, 2025, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. - Birding the Susquehanna Field Trip

Location: John Wright Restaurant Parking Lot, 234 N Front Street, Wrightsville, PA

Contact: Derek Stoner 484-723-3348 or derekstoner@hotmail.com

Derek Stoner will lead an afternoon field trip along the Susquehanna River. Meet at 1 p.m. in the parking lot of the John Wright Restaurant along the Susquehanna River in Wrightsville. This field trip provides a good opportunity to see Little Gull and maybe even Black-headed Gull which can sometimes be found among the "Bonies!" Please contact Derek (484-723-3348 or derekstoner@hotmail.com) by 6 p.m. the day before if you plan to attend or have questions.

Saturday, April 5, 2025, 7 a.m. - 1 p.m. – Memorial Lake Field Trip

Location: Memorial Lake State Park, Middle Road Parking Lot, Lebanon Co. near 18 Boundary Road, Grantville, PA

Contact: Jonathan Heller (717-940-6067 or jonathan.heller@comcast.net)

Jonathan Heller will lead a field trip to Memorial Lake and surrounding area in Lebanon County for early morning displaying American Woodcock at 7 a.m. 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.

Sunday, April 6, 2025, 4 p.m. - 6 p.m. - Beginner Birder Trip to Riverfront Park

Location: Riverfront Park Pavilion, 551 Vinegar Ferry Road, Marietta, PA,

Contact: Sarah Gotwols 717-940-3804 (call/text) or sarahann71880@gmail.com

Beginner Birder field trip at Riverfront Park and journey along the Northwest River Trail along the Susquehanna River. This trip is designed for individuals who would like to experience birding for the first time or would like to further their birding observation skills. Our target species will include a variety of spring migrants, such as warblers and other songbirds. Hawk species and Bald Eagles are often in the area as well. Please contact Sarah Gotwols 717-940-3804 (call/text) or sarahann71880@gmail.com if you plan to attend.

Thursday, April 10, 2025, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. - Monthly Club Meeting – “Bird Migration in Lancaster and Beyond”

Location: Middle Creek WMA Visitor Center, 100 Museum Road, Stevens, PA

Presented by Shelly Eshleman, MS, Willistown Conservation Trust

This program will focus on bird migration research using the Motus Wildlife Tracking System. You will learn about the birds that have been detected by the Middle Creek receiving station and the pathways that those birds have taken. We will also discuss the role that private landowners can play in helping local birds thrive.

Shelly Eshleman is the Motus Avian Research Coordinator at Willistown Conservation Trust and a PhD student at the University of Delaware. Her research follows birds throughout the year to better understand their movement patterns. As someone who grew up in Lancaster County, she is particularly passionate about conserving Pennsylvania's birds.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS BY LARRY BERNHARDT

The LCBC had a large increase in membership from 363 memberships on January 1, 2024 to 433 memberships by December 31, 2024. The LCBC would like to welcome the following new members who joined during the last quarter. Please help them feel welcome!

NEW MEMBERS:

Michael Carr – Denver
John & Victoria Clair – Denver
Eileen Dvorchak – Lancaster
Elsie Eberly – Lancaster

Jane Horan - Lancaster
Nicklas Hostetter - Landisville
Mark Petersheim - Conestoga
Paul Rineer - Marietta

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS:

Sustaining Members:

Michael Carr
Neil Donohue
Terri Nettke
Ted Nichols, II

Samir Saadeh
Teresa Webster
Ginger Weismantel

General Club Support:

Neil Donohue
Ted Nichols, II
Robert Paul & Sylvia Shellenberger

James A Still, Jr.
Lori Weaver

Big Sit:

James & Carol Feister
Peter & Barbara Hunsberger
Dr. Jack Wolgemuth

In Memory of Henry Petersheim:

Mark Petersheim

In Memory of Joan Wheeler:

Susan Wheeler

In Honor of Michael & Pamela Holmes:

Mary Alice High

In Honor of Mary Alice High:

Nina Wolf

Special Contribution:
Craig & Amy Burman

REVIEW OF COMPLETED EVENTS

October 5, 2024 – Fall Migration bird walk at Middle Creek. We had a total of 16 participants join us for this walk. We started at the Middle Creek Visitor Center and walked the interior “edge” of the conservation trail. Weather was clear with a light ground fog which burned off quickly as the sun came up. We had a total of 38 species for this part of the walk. Highlights included a Peregrine Falcon, American Kestrel and the group got great looks at a very cooperative Wilson’s Warbler. There was an almost continuous movement of Blue Jays flying over as well as some foraging in the trees. Some rarities had been reported earlier in the morning at Willow Point by another birder, so the group migrated to that area to attempt to find those. We got good looks at the Long-billed Dowitcher that was foraging with some Great Egrets and Lesser Yellowlegs, but missed the other reported rarities. We had 29 species on that section. The trip report combining both walks recorded 51 species. The trip report link is: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/280938>. Submitted by Craig Boyhont



Scarlet Tanager



Eastern Towhee

October 12, 2024 – “Big Sit” at Middle Creek. The annual “BIG SIT” at Middle Creek WMA was held for the 11th year on Saturday, October 12, 2024. A total of 77 species were identified by 17 participants who assisted throughout the day. The 77 species was the third highest total for this event only to be out done by 88 in 2022 and 83 in 2023. There were 4 new species added to the “BIG SIT” list which now stands at 138 species. The new species added included Least Sandpiper, Red-headed Woodpecker, Black-crowned Night Heron, and Chestnut-sided Warbler. Other highlights for the day included 10 species of waterfowl plus Pied-billed Grebe, 11 species of raptors which included all three falcon species, all 7 possible woodpecker species that could be seen at this time of year, American Woodcock, Winter Wren, Barn Swallow, Catbird, Common Raven, Indigo Bunting, Purple Finch and Barred Owl. View the full checklist online at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S199363691>. Submitted by Bruce Carl

October 19, 2024 – Noel Dorwart Park. John Lahr led a bird walk at Noel Dorwart Park with eight people present. It was a cold and blustery day and the birds were sheltered mostly in the underbrush. We managed to see and or hear about 11 species.

October 20, 2024 – State Game Lands 220. On a crisp late October day, our group of five birders explored the trails at this State Game Lands in Northeastern Lancaster County that is well-known for high-quality upland habitat that attracts a variety of migrating birds.

The warm-season grass plots and upland thickets held large numbers of sparrows (nine species including Swamp, Fox and Savannah), flocks of Yellow-rumped Warblers feeding on poison ivy berries, and the expected Ring-necked Pheasants at this stocked location. A male American Kestrel devouring a meadow vole was an exciting sight for all.

Classic late fall songbird migrants like Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Blue-headed Vireo, Hermit Thrush, Eastern Phoebe, Palm Warbler and Purple Finch highlighted our tally of 51 species found on this enjoyable fall bird walk.

Submitted by Derek Stoner.

November 9, 2024 – Bird Walks at North Museum’s Fall Fest at Millport Conservancy.

Club President Ted Nichols and Board Member Doug Anderson tabled on behalf of the club at the North Museum and Millport Conservancy’s annual Fall Fest held all day at the Millport property as part of our blossoming partnership with the North Museum. The event occurred on a beautiful fall day and served as a fundraiser to support both STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) education programming at the North Museum and Millport Conservancy’s efforts to restore the Lititz Run Creek through soil erosion control, wetlands restoration, and stream management. Information on birding and the club was provided to attendees as well as handouts to encourage bird journaling. Bird walks were also led through the property at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. with nearly 30 individuals venturing out to see roughly 30 different species. Highlights included great looks during the morning walk at a drake Wood Duck, many fulfilling views of Red-bellied Sapsuckers, a close encounter with a Yellow-rumped Warbler and Winter Wren and several interacting vocalizing Red-tailed Hawks over the property throughout the day. Board member Anne Esbenshade, who runs the Live Animal Room for the North Museum, had a display of her nature photography – with many great bird pictures – featured at the event while also working the event and sharing numerous critters she brought along to showcase the museum’s Live Animal Room Residents. Museum leadership and board members made several visits to the club’s table and were appreciative of our support of the event.



Ted Nichols with a group of bird walk participants at the North Museum's 2024 Fall Fest held at Millport Conservancy. Photo by Doug Anderson



North Museum Board President Dr. Charlie DiComo visits with Ted Nichols and Doug Anderson at the Bird Club's table during the North Museum's 2024 Fall Fest. Courtesy photo.

December 7, 2024 – Chestnut Grove Natural Area Field Trip. Sarah Gotwols led 5 birders on a field trip to Chestnut Grove Natural Area. Thirty-nine species were observed including Common Raven, Osprey, a variety of songbirds and an excellent display from a Wilson's Snipe, circling overhead several times before descending into the wetlands right in front of the group.

December 13 – 15, 2024 – Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and Eastern Shore trip. Club President Ted Nichols II led a group of 23 enthusiastic birders from the LCBC on our annual birding trip down to Chincoteague and the Eastern Shore. The club's longtime annual offering once again covered four days and three nights. The first day featured stops at Eastern Neck NWR and Blackwater NWR in Maryland. We also made a diversion for a Loggerhead Shrike that had been continuing at a site between the two refuges, but the bird was only seen once that day before we arrived. We redeemed ourselves after that stop by getting great looks of a dark form Rough-legged Hawk that we chased not far from Blackwater. The first night of the trip offered many the opportunity to witness an unannounced classified launch of an Electron rocket from Wallops Island during this trip.

The trip again offered all attendees a guided boat tour through the inner coastline of Assateague Island as well as tidal marshes and other bayside areas around Chincoteague. We revisited Mutton Hunk Fen State Natural Area Preserve where we found an Orange-crowned Warbler and added several new stops around Chincoteague to this year's trip to include one that offered great looks of Virginia Rails and Short-eared Owls.

The group finished the trip with a rough total of 113 species – many of which were new to the annual trip since Ted has been leading it as well as new to many longtime attendees of the trip! We did encounter several large flocks of Snow Geese which we don't typically encounter when the trip is held in November and we found two Ross's Geese in the flock. We were also honored to have Trevor MacLaurin, who has conducted research on American Oystercatchers at

Chincoteague for several seasons, able to join us for some of our adventures. Trevor is from Canada and luckily was in the area to give a presentation during the off season and has been one of the most active birders in the Chincoteague area the last few years finding many notable rarities. Thanks to Mike Epler for compiling eBird lists for the trip and all who participated!

Stay tuned for an announcement in the Summer 2025 newsletter with information on next year's trip and details on registering for the always popular members-only trip. Registrations will not be accepted until the official announcement comes out in the newsletter.



Club members pose for a group photo at Eastern Neck NWR in Maryland. Photo taken by Ted Nichols II

Club members pose for a group shot following a boat trip out exploring the coastline and marshes of Chincoteague and Assateague Islands. Photo taken by the staff from Daisey's Island Cruises.



Orange-crowned Warbler.
Photo by Cameala Freed



Club members pose for a group photo at Mutton Hunk Fen Natural Area. The preserve protects a globally rare sea-level fen – one of only four in Virginia. Sea-level fens are open, freshwater wetlands located between uplands and wide, oceanside tidal marshes. Photo by Lee Spradin.

December 15, 2024 - Southern Lancaster County Christmas Bird Count (CBC) by Derek Stoner, Count Compiler.

On Sunday, December 15, 2024, a team of 43 observers found 109 species of birds during a day afield that featured temperatures ranging from 24 to 37 degrees under cloudy to partly cloudy conditions. Smaller bodies of water like ponds were mostly frozen, while the reservoirs and rivers were primarily ice-free. Weather in the week preceding the count was relatively mild.

The most notable birds found are a well-photographed Trumpeter Swan on the Susquehanna River near Fishing Creek, Greater White-fronted Goose at Muddy Run Reservoir, two Sandhill Cranes at Octoraro Reservoir and Long-tailed Duck on the river below the Holtwood Dam.

Since this CBC circle features significant waterbodies that draw both large numbers and diversity of waterfowl, it's interesting to see the variation year to year in the waterfowl category. This year we tallied 20 species of waterfowl overall, with the duck "misses" being Lesser Scaup, American Wigeon, Northern Shoveler and Common Goldeneye. A flyover flock of Snow Geese was noted by multiple groups but no Ross's Goose could be found among them.

The team of thirteen feeder watchers recorded the only observations of Baltimore Oriole and Pine Warbler. These two birds were found at separate feeder locations several miles apart and both were seen feeding on peanut butter suet offerings.

With 177 cumulative species being recorded over the 48 editions of the SoLanCo Christmas Bird Count, it's interesting to note that exactly 50 species of birds have been recorded on every single count. To test your local bird knowledge, can you guess what those 50 species are?



Trumpeter Swan by Barry Blust

December 22, 2024 – Christmas Bird Count for Kids (CBC4Kids). John Lahr and Lisa

Sanchez led the Christmas Bird Count for Kids at Lancaster County Central Park. It was a cold and blustery day again with 16 people present including 6 kids. The youngest was 4 and he and his mother left after about a half hour. They later came back and walked along Mill Creek with us and then headed up another trail to go home. The kids were all very enthusiastic and pointed out birds even by name. We were surprised at the number of birds we saw even with the cold and wind. We had 14 species for the 2 hours we walked. Notable were a never-ending stream of American Crows that seemed to be heading in the direction of the Park City roost. A Brown Creeper, several Golden-crowned Kinglets, a Bald Eagle, two Red-tailed Hawks and a Northern Harrier were highlights. There was a distinct lack of ducks on the Mill Creek but that could have been due to the amount of ice on the creek.

December 22, 2024 – Lancaster Christmas Bird Count. This report will be available for the next newsletter.

December 29, 2024 – Lititz Christmas Bird Count. In support of the 125th Audubon Christmas Bird Count, the Lititz CBC was held on Dec. 29, 2024. The count is centered on Brickerville and was first held in 1905. The count saw the day encounter some rain early on – especially during owling – but it cleared up by the time we saw daylight and really started counting in the morning. Despite temperatures rising to 66 degrees, most small bodies of water were mostly covered with ice and the main lake was about 80 percent covered with ice. A pizza lunch was again offered to all count participants at Middle Creek midday and allowed for a break and some camaraderie. Nearly 45 individuals participated this year. Data is still coming in and has not yet been compiled as it is not due to Audubon until February 28. A further update on the count will be provided at a later time. Highlights at this point include four Sandhill Cranes and a Ross's Goose that were continuing at Middle Creek. Thanks to everyone who participated in 2024 and continues to support the Lititz CBC. Many thanks also to the Pennsylvania Game Commission and their staff at Middle Creek and continuing to provide us with amazing access to the wildlife management area. It should also be noted that many of these staff members

participate in the count all day helping to maximize our coverage and counting efforts. The next Lititz CBC – to support the 126th Audubon CBC -- is scheduled for Dec. 28, 2025.



Some of the nearly 45 Lititz CBC participants gather for a group photo following lunch at the Middle Creek Visitor Center on Dec. 29, 2024. Courtesy photo.

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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