



THE SYRINX



*Voicebox of the
Westmoreland Bird & Nature Club*
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The Glyptodon, which Darwin found
Beside the South Atlantic main,
Was in no harder armour bound,
Than that my spirit did enchain;
Till, bade by thee, Love rent in twain,
The fetters which my fancy tied
To boulder, glacier, and moraine,
And bore me to thy side!

Like some fantastic Trilobite
That perished in Silurian sea,
And long lay hid from mortal sight,
So was the heart I yield to thee.
Now from its stony matrix free,
Thy paleontologic skill
Once more hath call'd it forth to be
The servant of they will.

Valentine

By a Paleontologist

Borne upon Pterodactyl's wing,
This heart, which once you deemed of stone,
Model of maids, to thee I bring,
And offer it to thee alone!
Not Owen, pondering o'er bone
Of great Dinornis, fonder grew
Of mighty wingless birds unknown,
Than I, sweet maid, of you.

Edward Forbes (1815-1854)



Glyptodon

About the poem. . .

Some of the names and taxonomic terms need to be unraveled for those unfamiliar with 19th century science, but first, a brief note about the author. Edward Forbes was a brilliant unsung naturalist, scientist and poet of the mid-1800's who I'm sure we'd have heard more about had he not died at the young age of 39. He was the first to propose land bridges to explain animal and plant distribution. He published papers in marine biology, geology, paleontology, zoology and botany. During his short career he was Curator of the Geology Museum of London, professor of botany at King's College, president of the Geological Society, paleontologist for the Geological Survey of Great Britain, professor of natural history at the Royal School of Mines, and finally, professor of natural history at the University of Edinburgh. He advised the young Thomas Henry Huxley and was instrumental in getting the 25-year old Huxley into the Royal Society.

The Valentine poem was read at the dinner of the Royal Geological Society of London on Valentine's Day, February 14, 1845. In attendance at the dinner was the famous paleontologist Richard Owen, mentioned in the first stanza, and Charles Darwin, mentioned in the second stanza. Darwin at the time was famous for his theory of coral island formation from his travels aboard the Beagle, but still 14 years away from publishing the *Origin of Species*. Owen had coined the word dinosaur and published papers on the giant extinct birds of the genus *Dinornis*, mentioned in the first stanza.

Charles Darwin found many fossil animals in South America during his 5-year voyage aboard the H.M.S. Beagle. One skeleton he unearthed belonged to a giant extinct armadillo, a *Glyptodon*, mentioned in the second stanza. A drawing of a glyptodon skeleton appears at the bottom of the *Syrinx* title page.

I think most people know trilobites are extinct Paleozoic arthropods and that the Silurian is a Paleozoic era in the geologic timescale.

That information may make a little more sense of the poem. I do not know the name of the young lady to whom the valentine poem addresses. I presume it was Forbe's future wife. Forbes married the daughter of Sir Charles Ashworth three years later in 1848. Neither do I know if she was present at the Geological Society dinner reading that evening. It's quite a tribute to her and gets better with each reading.

Darwin and Owen, friends at the time, probably got a chuckle out of the poem. Owen, who cataloged Darwin's Beagle collection of fossils, even visited Darwin at Down House. Their friendship dissolved after the publication of the *Origin* in 1859. Owen, brilliant anatomist that he was, failed to see the evolutionary features in the skeletons of even his own collection and still believed everything was independently created. His reputation as a scientist went downhill afterwards.

Forbes and Darwin were friends and correspondents for the remainder of Forbes life. His untimely death from an illness was a tragic loss to the scientific community. He would also have been a supporter of Darwin's theory, but he died five years before the *Origin* was published. Darwin had told only a few people about the book he was writing, Forbes not included, but Darwin had named Forbes as a possible editor for the *Origin of Species* in a will if he (Darwin) should die before finishing his work. That's quite a vote of confidence.



Edward Forbes



An extinct flightless bird.



Trilobite – extinct arthropod



Field Trips and Outings

Birders of Yore Part 14

The Lame Birder

Dick Byers

Impromptu Winter Night Hikes The full moon occurs on the following dates: Jan. 16, Feb. 14 and Mar. 16. Best night for a near full moon that is high in the sky is two nights before the full moon. We also need full snow cover to see well, so watch for a club email announcement on the dates of Jan. 14, Feb. 12 and Mar. 14. Of these dates, only the March full moon falls on a weekend. Watch for announcements and meeting times on the Internet.

Sat. Jan. 25 Winter Hike, Westmoreland Heritage Trail Meet at the Five Points Park & Ride on Route 22 at **9:00 a.m.** We'll drive to Slickville and work a car shuttle from the Slickville parking lot to the Beaver Run Reservoir or Delmont depending on how far people want to hike. From Delmont to Slickville it is 3.7 miles. From the Reservoir parking lot it is 2.7 miles. We can plan a one-way hike in either direction. The Five Points Park & Ride is about 2 miles east of the Delmont cloverleaf on Route 22 diagonally across the road from the BP Station where a restroom is located.

Fri. Feb. 14-17 Great Backyard Bird Count Count the maximum number of each species of bird at your feeder at any one time and also the birds in your local neighborhood if you want. Report your list for each day to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at www.birdsource.org You can also submit your lists this year to eBird.

Sat. Mar. 22 Waterfowl Tour Meet Ken Byerly (724-468-8594) at the Beaver Run Reservoir parking lot on Route 380 at **9:00 A.M.** From there we'll move on to Loyalhanna, Derry Lake, Keystone S.P. and time permitting -Trout Run Reservoir.

Alfred Newton (1829-1907) probably doesn't ring a bell with many birders. A knee injury at age 5 allowed one leg to grow faster than the other causing permanent lameness. Perhaps it was a blessing for it slowed him down and made him more observant. He and his brother Edward were natural history collectors while young and inseparable companions throughout their lives. Alfred entered Magdalene College in Cambridge, England, in 1848 and graduated as a zoologist primarily interested in ornithology, particularly bird distribution, taxonomy and the causes of extinction, Newton was the initial investigator into the extinction of the Great Auk. The last two confirmed specimens had been taken in 1844, just 4 years before he entered college. He visited Iceland in 1858 to collect information. His inquiry convinced everyone that the extermination of the Great Auk had been greatly hastened by the museums offering large sums for their skins and eggs. Every museum wanted specimens of the bird before it disappeared.

Newton had been constantly troubled by field ornithology problems. Upon his return from Iceland he found the Journal of the Linnean Society on his desk from the July 1 meeting of 1858 when Darwin and Wallace's papers on the discovery of the theory of natural selection had been presented. While no one at the meeting caught the significance of what the two great naturalists had found, it did not escape Newton. Here are his comments, written years later: "I sat up late that night to read it; and never shall I forget the impression it made upon me. Herein was contained a perfectly simple solution of all the difficulties which had been troubling me for months past. I hardly know whether I at first felt more vexed at the solution not having occurred to me than pleased that it had been found at all. However, after reading these papers more than once I went to bed satisfied that a solution had been found. All personal feeling apart, it came to me like the direct revelation of a higher power, and I awoke next morning with the consciousness that there was an end of all the mystery in the simple phrase, "Natural Selection." I am free to confess that in my joy I did not then perceive

Continued on page 12...



Outings Revisited

Sun. Sep. 22 Kimberly Run Natural Area

Postponed due to heavy rain on Saturday, Sunday turned out to be the Somerset County Conservancy's annual picnic, but the trail gate was open and we still found room to park. The well-kept trails were not muddy at all despite the rain and we much enjoyed walking in this beautiful hemlock forest. We ran into Jeff Paine and other conservancy members, including Tom and Janet Kuehl. Jeff enticed us to return next spring with his tales of the warblers that are attracted to this conifer woodland. We wished Jack and Valerie Baker could have joined us because the forest floor was alive with mushrooms, only a few of which we could identify - **wolf's milk**, **death angel**, and **hen of the woods**.

Beech trees were interspersed among the hemlocks and the ground in places literally crawled with **beechdrops**, one of the parasitic flowering plants that has lost the ability to make chlorophyll. We also found the fruit capsules of **Indian pipe** and lots of **wood sorrel**.

Chickadees and **black-throated green warblers** called from the branches. The field was loaded with asters of several species and clumps of **tall sunflower**. The center of the field was planted with switchgrass. Jamie Greenawalt found the diminutive **deKay snake**, also known as the brown snake along the trail. It quickly disappeared into some moss cover.

We plan to return next spring.

Participants: Dick Byers, Ellie Cochran, Jamie Greenawalt, Janet Halle, Chuck Kuchta.



Piersol Trail
of the
Kimberly
Run Natural
Area

Wed. Sep. 25 Allegheny Front Hawkwatch

The peak broadwing hawk migration had already passed, but the potential of the **East Wind** forecast lured eight hawk watchers to the lookout. A peregrine falcon circled several times shortly after we arrived and the first golden eagle of the season passed low, very close to the lookout, and was hotly pursued by a common raven. One adult bald eagle passed over heading north and never returned. Two osprey and a merlin completed the most wished for species. Eleven species in late September is a good variety, but the day's total was only 46 with 13 being broadwings. By this day, some 4370 broad-winged hawks had already passed the lookout. The peak came very early this year. There is a 95% chance it will come sometime between September 16 and 28, but no one can predict in advance what that day will be. Most of the show on our chosen day was over by 1 p.m.

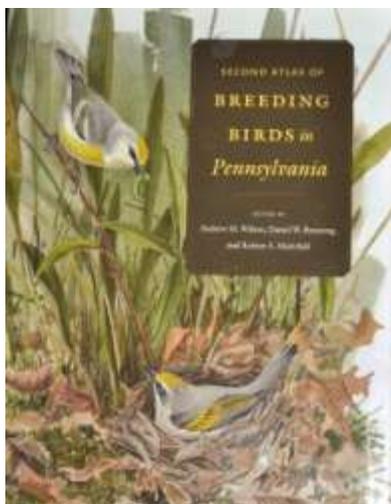
Participants: l to r. Georgia Shelak, Linda Huber, Karen Jackson, Linda Lou Baker, Nicole McCoy, Jason Pigan, Dick Byers. Missing from photo is Dennis Smeltzer,



Linda Huber,
Linda Lou
Baker & Jason
Pigan watch
the first golden
eagle of the
season pass off
the point at eye
level.

Thur. Sep. 26 Club Meeting Bob Mulvihill signed and sold books of the 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas and gave us one of the most interesting talks we've ever had. It was disappointing that only 19 members of our club attended. Bob explained the color coded distribution change maps so you could tell at a glance whether a bird species had increased or decreased since the first atlas - done in the mid-1980's. He then used the birds of the 2nd BBA logo to illustrate his point. He also showed all the research done in conjunction with the atlas work. Remember we had to assess the presence or absence of hemlock in each of our atlas reports. That data will be invaluable for the 3rd PA Breeding Bird Atlas as the woolly adelgid sweeps across the state in the next 20 years. Breeding bird habitats were compared to the Marcellus shale layers and wind energy sites, two activities that will impact bird distribution and population in the decades to come. Birds are clearly in danger from Marcellus shale drilling.

There is a great wealth of information in this book. I've heard people say they would never pay \$55 for any book. Frankly, the price is very reasonable considering what you are getting and this is no small volume. It measures 9.5 x 12.5 inches, has 586 pages and weighs 6 ¾ lbs. Every PA breeding bird species is represented by a full page of text, two or three maps showing distribution, distribution change from the first atlas and bird density. There is also a graph of the breeding bird survey trend and a table showing the number of blocks in which the species was recorded in both the first and second atlases with the percent change calculated. If you are interested in what's happening to any breeding bird species in Pennsylvania, this is your source. It is worth every dime of the price.



The cover painting of the Brewster's and golden-winged warbler is by artist Julie Zickefoose who also painted the cover of the first Breeding Bird Atlas illustrating a nesting chestnut-sided warbler.

Sat. Oct. 5 Blacklick Valley Natural Area It was a pleasant fall morning to walk the wide level trails of this beautiful park just 3 miles north of the Westmoreland County line. It had rained early the night before holding back nocturnal bird migrants. We only had a dozen species, but the warm night (68F) at 9 a.m. brought out the spiders. We encountered webs stretched across even the broadest sections of the trail. Without a field guide the only one we could identify was the triangular orb weaver. Specimen below is from Powdermill.



We found next year's skunk cabbage poking up among pancake colored cinnamon ferns. Blackgum and hornbeam gave the woods a red tint. There were huge specimens of chestnut oak, shingle oak and black cherry. Japanese stiltgrass is pushing out many species, even some of the long established ferns. Best birds were a sapsucker, pileated woodpecker, a flock of phoebes, Carolina wren and blue-headed vireo. Beaver were evident from



gnawings on a blackgum tree.

Participants:
Dick Byers
Billie Moser
Tom Pearson

Sat. Oct. 12 The Big Sit For the 6th year in a row we had perfect weather for the Big Sit. It clouded up around 2 o'clock, but by that time most were packing up to leave since we had already broke the record of 42 held since 2010 by one species.

I arrived at the observation deck at 6:20 a.m. and began calling for screech owls. Two answered, so I began calling for barred owls. We've never had barred owls on the Big Sit. Surprisingly, one answered – from the same locale the screech owls were calling from, very suspicious since barred owls eat screech owls! The call also sounded artificial. Was Tom on the opposite lake shore? But I hadn't seen his car in the beach parking lot when I arrived, so, on the chance that might have been an off key live barred owl, I put the barred owl on the list. Five minutes later I saw head lights come on in the trail parking lot on the other side of the bridge and immediately knew my barred owl had been prefabricated. I had missed seeing Tom's car there when I drove past in the darkness of the morning. Tom had actually seen a family of 4 screech owls and I heard another doing the monotone warble on my side of the lake, so we had five for the list. The club should think about putting owl boxes along that trail.

By 8:15 we had 20 species on the list. Other people didn't start arriving until 9 o'clock. By 10:35 we were up to 35 species. It took another 2.5 hours to add five more species. The record breaking bird came at 1 p.m., a pair of wood ducks flying over, who eventually landed in the marsh and we got a quick look at them through the scope. Activity them really shut down and most of us were on our way home by 2:30. Karen Jackson and Ellie Cochran put in another hour and a half after 5 o'clock trying to add more new species to the record without success.

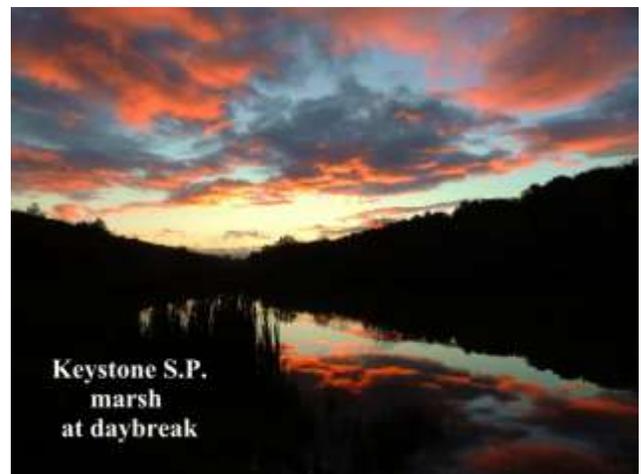
The birds in order of appearance are as follows: Screech owl -5; killdeer – 5; towhee – 2; white-throated sparrow – 3; robin – 3; cardinal – 3; song sparrow – 5; crow – 5; swamp sparrow – 1; great blue heron – 2; blue jay – 5; red-winged blackbird – 200+; Eastern phoebe – 2; chickadee species – 1; pied-billed grebe – 2; pileated woodpecker – 1; Canada goose – 7; mallard – 2; grackle – 1; Carolina wren – 2, bluebird – 1; flicker - 3; brown creeper – 1; kingfisher – 2; downy woodpecker – 2; ruby-crowned kinglet – 3; Carolina chickadee – 3; tufted titmouse – 2; golden-crowned kinglet – 1; palm warbler – 1; catbird – 1; red-bellied woodpecker – 2; field sparrow – 1; goldfinch – 1; w.b. nuthatch – 1; turkey vulture – 9+; red-tailed hawk – 2; osprey – 1; Cooper's hawk – 1; black-

capped chickadee – 2; house finch – 1; starling – 1; cedar waxwing – 8; wood duck – 2. **Total species 43. Number of birds – 305. All-time total 70 species**, only 17 of which have been seen all six years. **D. Byers**

Participants: Ken Byerly, Dick Byers, Ellie Cochran, Glen Davis, Patience Fisher, Karen & Merle Jackson, Nicole McCoy, Tom Pearson, Mary Jane Seipler, Georgia Shalek, Dennis Smeltzer, Rose & Fritz Tillmann.



Watchers during a lull at the Big Sit

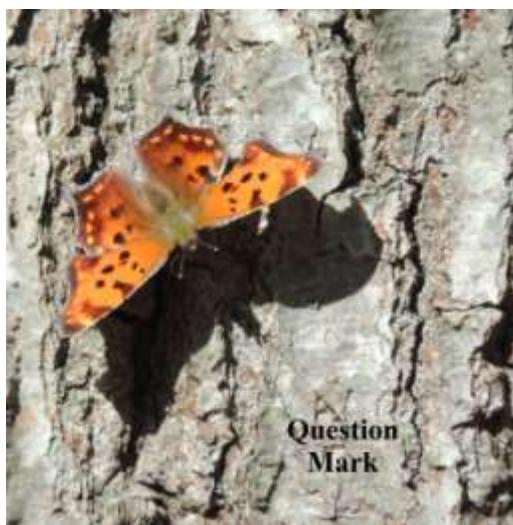
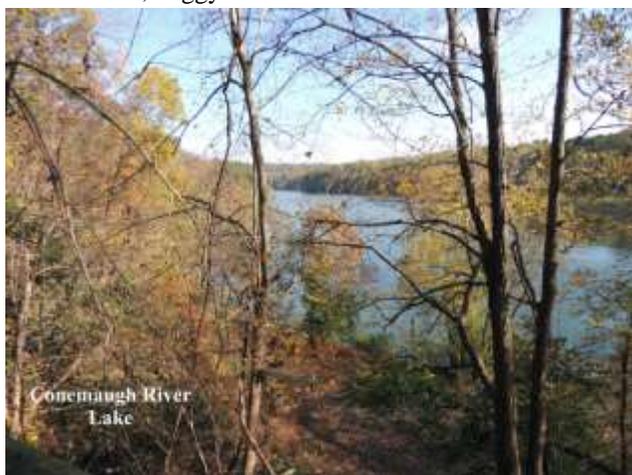


Sun. Oct. 20 Conemaugh Dam Fortunately the government shutdown ended just before our hike and we did not have to shift it to other locales. It was a fine morning for the walk, mostly sunny with temperatures in the 50's and 60's. Rains the previous two days had wasted most of the colored leaves, and the clear night allowed migrating waterfowl to over fly us. There wasn't a duck to be seen on the Conemaugh River Lake, but who could complain with such fine weather and the scenery of our chosen route. We hiked from the Bow Ridge parking lot

over the ridgetop to Livermore and back, a distance a little over 4 miles. The water level of the lake was high – almost to the top of the arches of the stone bridges. On our return we watched a train pass over the trestle in front of the eagle nest.

We only had a dozen bird species – kingfisher, bluebird, goldfinch, pileated, downy, hairy and red-bellied woodpecker, cedar waxwing, chickadee, raven, crow and turkey vulture. Three wildflowers were still blooming – sneezeweed, red clover and wood aster. I added a few tree and shrub species to the West Penn Trail data file for the club book. We also had a question mark butterfly pose for us and saw some fossil plants.

Participants: Mark Bowers, Dick Byers, Ellie Cochran, Dale Matuza, Peggy Gorrell.



Sun. Nov. 3 Members' Meeting Thirty-two attended our annual show & tell meeting with cookie sampling and Chinese auction. Monica Miller started the show with her research on the Lepidoptera

focusing on Luna moths and Milbert's Tortoiseshell. She accompanied Len & Linda Hess to Texas where Linda presented all kinds of animal finds in the Brownsville area. Barb and Dave McMillan took their horses out west and showed interesting angles of Mt. Rushmore from horseback. Margaret Ackerman showed pictures of Lake Tahoe. Dick Byers finished with a few of the owls of his and Bill Powers' research project and also the owl boxes funded by the club that are ready for use.

Barb & Dave McMillan also showed pictures of a robin nest anomaly of their last two years' residence in Herminie and brought in the nest specimens. For two successive years this robin made a *double nest* (see photo below) and raised young. These strange events do happen for reasons unknown. If the behavior is beneficial to the species, it may be naturally selected and become characteristic of the species. We could see no special benefits to the side dummy nest of this robin. If anything, it simply meant more work and expense of energy. No eggs were laid in it and the dummy nest contained mostly cherry pits. Strange.



There were three tables of Chinese auction items ranging from about 50 books (half on birds) to porcelain animals, carved owls, sweat shirts, framed photographs, old bird magazines, bluebird houses and a copy of the Syrinx nature poems. Tickets were the usual price of 25 cents each or five for a dollar. The cookie table had over a dozen varieties. Everyone had a good time.



Sat. Nov. 16 Somerset Lake It was a beautiful warm November morning, the kind of weather you don't

want for ducks. I'm surprised anybody showed up but several in our party of nine had never been to Somerset Lake, a 253-acre impoundment tucked inconspicuously inside the Somerset city boundaries. Some went to see the trail, as yet incomplete, being built around the lake by the Somerset County Conservancy (SCC). The future of this lake, unfortunately, is in jeopardy. The dam is condemned and the Fish & Boat Commission lack the repair funds. SCC is trying to put pressure on the legislature to provide funds. I'm waiting for petition forms for our club to help.

There were two sleeping ducks on Donegal Lake where we met, but we couldn't tell whether they were ruddy ducks or female buffleheads. We made a quick stop at Kooser State Park and headed for the Somerset Lake dam. The tally from the dam was 4 ruddy ducks, 1 black duck, 1 common merganser, and a ring-billed gull. A great blue heron flew over. We followed the trail along the east side of the lake through a maple and oak forest with scattered red and white pine trees. The lighting is better on this side for duck watching with the sun behind you. We picked up a green-winged teal at the first inlet and heard ravens, crows, song sparrows, chickadees and golden-crowned kinglets. At the marsh end, almost completely dry due to the leaky dam, we added a pileated woodpecker, a possible savannah sparrow, and swamp sparrow. As we were about to leave 10 killdeer flew in and landed on the marsh shoreline. Succeeding counts determined there were 11, then 12 and finally 13. When we settled on 13 someone made a recount and came up with 14. Binocular counters always see more birds than those counting with scopes. The count validity is in the eyes of the beholder's equipment.

Some of our party stopped at Greenlick on the way home and added a cormorant, kingfisher and pied-bill grebe to the list.

Participants: Norm Bono, Ken Byerly, Dick Byers, Patience Fisher, Nancy Murphy, Ron Repine, Georgia Shalek, Dennis Smeltzer, and Marty.

Sun. Dec. 15 Bushy Run S.P. Christmas Bird Count

The 40th year for this count was not too noteworthy. We've done it in worst weather conditions, but it was a miserable day to find birds. The temperature wasn't bad (27-34F) but the wind at 8-16 mph made it feel much colder and kept the birds in cover. Besides the birds being hard to find, the heavy cloud cover made lighting conditions dark and dismal the entire day creating identification problems. Determining what species of bird

you're looking at against a shaded slate gray sky is never easy. We also had fewer people, 25 assigned to six field parties, well below the 12-13 parties we fielded last year. The results, as expected, were well below the 10-year average of 69 species and 7,000+ individuals. We worked hard to record 61 species and a total of 3,141 individuals. We broke two all-time records – ruby-crowned kinglet and ring-billed gull. Please see the tally sheet on page 13. An analysis of the 40 year data will be forthcoming later.

Authors still needed for Natural Areas of Westmoreland County

1. Ackerman Nature Reserve
2. Any section of the LHT. One section through SGL # 111 complete
3. Bald Knob (Highest Point in County)
4. Bear Run Reserve
5. Beaver Run Reservoir area (birding)
6. Blacklick Valley Natural Area (pictures and notes available)
7. Crooked Creek Lake
8. Derry Lake (Notes and a map available)
9. Ferncliff Peninsula
10. Fish Run Trail
11. Five Star Trail
12. Ghost Town Trail
13. Indian Creek Valley Bike Trail
14. Lillian Kellman/Skena Nature Reserve in Murrysville
15. Little Sewickley Creek
16. Loyalhanna Gamelands
17. Mammoth County Park
18. Marshall Fields & Powdermill Loop Trail
19. Mountain Stream Trail
20. Nature Park
21. Northmoreland County Park
22. Ohiopyle S.P. (lesser known features)
23. Powdermill Nature Reserve
24. Quemahoning Reservoir
25. Randall Reserve
26. Roaring Run Natural Area (Several trails complete)

27. Robert Ache Memorial Forest (Laughlintown)
28. SGL # 153 (Encloses Packsaddle Gap)
29. SGL # 296
30. SGL # 42 (some work done)
31. SGL # 51 (Elk Rocks section done) Chalkhill bog, Limestone Creek, Dunbar Trail need authors
32. Sloan School grounds Murrysville
33. Somerset Lake
34. Todd Sanctuary
35. Trout Run Reservoir
36. Turtle Creek Gorge
37. Westmoreland Heritage Trail (notes & pictures available)
38. Winnie Palmer Nature Reserve
39. Yellow Creek S.P. (birding)
40. SGL # 276
41. South Park, Greensburg (Logging threat)
42. 981 strips
Contact Dick Byers to volunteer

3rd Quarter 2013

Westmoreland County Bird Report

Karen Jackson

Loons & Grebes

Grebe, Pied-billed – 4 RT 711 9/25 (L&LH)

Cormorants

Cormorant, Double-crested - 2 Loyalhanna 8/26 (TV)

Hérons

Heron, Great Blue - heronry in a Sycamore on Conemaugh River 8/15 (TV)

Egret, Great – 1 Mutual wetlands 8/10 (DS)

Heron, Green - 1 Beaver Run 8/25 (KB), 1 Keystone SP 9/9 (KJ)

Waterfowl

Swan, Mute – 4 Delmont 9/21 (KB)
Goose, Canada - 92 Beaver Run 9/7 (KB)
Duck, Wood - 11 Beaver Run 9/19 (KB)
Mallard – 2 Conemaugh River 8/15 (TV)
Teal, Blue-winged – 6 Beaver Run 9/19 (KB)
Merganser, Common - 20 Conemaugh River 8/15 (TV)

Birds of Prey

Vulture, Black - 2 yard 7/26 (L&LH)
Vulture, Turkey – 4 ODR 8/18 (L&LH)
Osprey –1 Latrobe 9/30 (CK), 2 at nest Loyalhanna 8/26 (TV)
Eagle, Bald. - 1 Trees Mills 8/16 (KB)
Harrier, Northern -1 Delmont 9/21 (KB)
Hawk, Sharp-shinned –1 Delmont 9/21 (KB)
Hawk, Cooper's –1 Delmont 9/18 (KB)
Hawk, Broad-winged - 1 Delmont 9/4 (KB)
Hawk, Red-tailed – 3 ODR 7/1 (L&LH)
Kestrel, American – 2 Conemaugh River 8/15 (TV)
Merlin - 1 Delmont 9/17 & 9/27 (KB)

Wildfowl

Turkey, Wild – 12 Delmont 9/21 (KB)

Shorebirds

Killdeer –7 Keystone SP 8/18 (KJ)
Yellowlegs, Lesser - 1 Mammoth Park 8/25 (TV)
Sandpiper, Spotted –1 Conemaugh River 8/15 (TV)
Sanderling - 1 in summer plumage Keystone SP 8/23 (TV)

Gulls & Terns

Tern, Common - 2 Keystone SP 8/23 (TV)

Doves

Pigeon, Rock - 19 New Alex 9/8 (KJ)
Dove, Mourning - 55 Delmont 8/31 (KB)

Cuckoos

Cuckoo, Black-billed - 1 yard 7/5 (L&LH)
Cuckoo, Yellow-billed – 1 Delmont 9/28 (KB)

Owls

Screech Owl, Eastern - Latrobe 9/30 (CK)
Owl, Barred - 2 yard 9/6 (L&LH)

Nightjars

Nighthawk, Common - 23 Delmont 9/8 (KB)

Swifts

Swift, Chimney - 25 Beaver Run 9/7 (KB)

Hummingbirds

Hummingbird, Ruby - throated-10 yard 8/15 (L&LH)

Kingfishers

Kingfisher, Belted – 2 Keystone SP 7/11 (KJ)

Woodpeckers

Woodpecker, Red-bellied - 6 Delmont 9/23 (KB)
Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied - 1 Delmont 9/26 (KB)
Woodpecker, Downy – 6 yard 7/1 (L&LH)
Woodpecker, Hairy –4 Delmont 9/17 (KB)
Flicker, Northern – 1 Delmont 9/15 (KB)
Woodpecker, Pileated – 2 Delmont 9/23 (KB)

Flycatchers

Kingbird, Eastern - 4 Keystone SP 8/5 (KJ)
Wood-Pewee, Eastern – 2 Delmont 9/2 (KB)
Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied - 1 Delmont 9/11 (KB)
Flycatcher, Acadian –3 Delmont 9/9 (KB)
Flycatcher, Least – 2 Beaver Run 8/27 (KB)
Phoebe, Eastern – 2 Delmont 9/25 (KB)

Swallows

Swallow, Tree – 19 Keystone SP 7/23 (KJ)
Swallow, Northern Rough-winged - 21 Keystone SP 7/11(KJ)
Swallow, Barn – 22 ODR 7/13 (L&LH)

Jays, Crows

Jay, Blue - 11 yard 9/1 (L&LH)
Crow, American - 300+ RT 130E 9/12 (L&LH)
Raven, Common - 2 Delmont 8/25 (KB)

Titmice

Chickadee, Black-capped - 12 yard 8/1 (L&LH)
Chickadee, Carolina - 3 Murrys ville 7/4 (KB)
Titmouse, Tufted - 13 Yard 8/1 (L&LH)

Nuthatches, Creepers

Nuthatch, White-breasted - 10 yard 7/1 (L&LH)

Wrens

Wren, Carolina - 4 Delmont 9/5 (KB)
Wren, House - 8 yard 7/1 (L&LH)
Wren, Winter - 4 Delmont 9/27 (KB)

Kinglets

Kinglet, Golden-crowned - 1 Delmont 9/27 (KB)
Kinglet, Ruby-crowned - 5 Delmont 9/27 (KB)
Gnatcatcher, Blue-gray - 2 Trees Mills 8/31 (KB)

Thrushes

Bluebird, Eastern - 6 WHT 7/7 (KB)
Thrush, Swainson's - 2 Delmont 9/15 (KB)
Thrush, Hermit - 1 Delmont 9/15 (KB)
Thrush, Wood - 3 WHT 7/7 (KB)
Robin, American - 16 yard 8/3 (L&LH)

Mimics

Catbird, Gray - 2 ODR 7/13 (L&LH)
Mockingbird, Northern - 1 ODR 7/13 (L&LH)
Thrasher, Brown - 2 ODR 9/9 (L&LH)

Waxwings, Pipits, Shrikes

Waxwing, Cedar - 25 Delmont 9/5 (KB)

Vireos

Vireo, White-eyed - 1 WHT 7/7 (KB)
Vireo, Blue-headed - 1 Delmont 9/28 (KB)
Vireo, Yellow-throated - 1 Delmont 8/31 (KB)
Vireo, Warbling - 2 Delmont 9/11 (KB)
Vireo, Philadelphia - 3 Delmont 9/18 (KB)
Vireo, Red-eyed - 4 Delmont 9/5 (KB)

Warblers

Warbler, Blue-winged - 1 Delmont 9/18 (KB)
Warbler, Tennessee - 5 Delmont 9/16 (KB)
Warbler, Nashville - 2 Delmont 9/27 (KB)
Parula, Northern - 2 Keystone SP 8/12 (KJ)
Warbler, Yellow - 1 Delmont 8/20 (KB)
Warbler, Chestnut-sided - 4 Delmont 9/18 (KB)
Warbler, Magnolia - 4 Delmont 9/11 (KB)
Warbler, Cape May - 2 Delmont 9/15 (KB)
Warbler, Black-throated Blue - 2 Delmont 9/5 (KB)
Warbler, Black-throated Green - 4 yard 9/29 (L&LH)
Warbler, Pine - 1 Delmont 9/8 (KB)
Warbler, Palm - 1 Delmont 9/21 (KB)
Warbler, Bay-breasted - 3 Delmont 9/18 (KB)
Warbler, Blackpoll - 2 Delmont 9/16 (KB)
Warbler, Black and White - 3 Delmont 9/5 (KB)
Redstart, American - 3 Delmont 9/11 (KB)
Waterthrush, Northern - 1 Delmont 9/20 (KB)
Warbler, Connecticut - 1 Delmont 9/20 (KB)
Yellowthroat, Common - 4 ODR 7/13 (L&LH)
Warbler, Hooded - 2 yard 9/29 (L&LH)

Warbler, Wilson's - 1 yard 8/16 (L&LH), 1 Delmont 9/23 (KB)

Warbler, Canada - 1 Delmont 9/13 (MF)

Tanagers

Tanager, Scarlet - 3 Beaver Run 9/7 (KB)

Finches

Cardinal, Northern - 15 Delmont 9/28 (KB)
Grosbeak, Rose-breasted - 6 yard 9/1 (L&LH)
Bunting, Indigo - 4 Delmont 9/18 (KB)
Towhee, Eastern - 6 Delmont 9/27 (KB)

Sparrows

Sparrow, Chipping - 8 yard 8/3 (L&LH)
Sparrow, Field - 2 ODR 7/13 (L&LH)
Sparrow, Song - 4 ODR 9/13 (L&LH)
Sparrow, Lincoln's - 2 Delmont 9/28 (KB)
Sparrow, White-throated - 1 Delmont 9/24 (KB)

Blackbirds

Bobolink - 4 ODR 7/13 (L&LH)
Blackbird, Red-winged - 600 Trees Mills 9/5 (KB)
Meadowlark, Eastern - 2 Bethel Church Rd 7/13 (L&LH)
Grackle, Common - 200+ yard 8/23 (L&LH)
Cowbird, Brown-headed - 12 WHT 7/7 (KB)
Oriole, Orchard - 2 WHT 7/7 (KB)
Oriole, Baltimore - 1 Delmont 9/3 (KB)

Red Finches

Finch, Purple - 6 yard 7/1 (L&LH)
Finch, House - 6 yard 8/1 (L&LH)

Yellow Finches

Siskin, Pine - 2 yard 8/19 (L&LH)
Goldfinch, American - 18 yard 8/1 (L&LH)

Weaver Finches

Sparrow, House - many throughout the qtr NewAlex (KJ)

Total to date - 209 species. Record - 238.

County all-time checklist update has 308 species listed.

Possible, probable and confirmed breeding species is 161.

**Send in your year's backyard
bird list to the editor for
inclusion in the April-June
Newsletter! Dues also due!**

Supporting Members

We may have a lot of trouble finding people to serve as officers in this club, but we certainly aren't at a loss for generous supporting members. This is a list of the members who renewed at or above the supporting membership level.

\$ 25-\$100.00+

Tom & Billie Moser
Glenn Davis
Paul Lonigro
Gerald & Dolores Wiltrout

\$ 20.00

Jack & Valerie Baker
Jason & Karen Barnhart
Daniel & Sylvia Barton
George Bercik
Linda & Tom Berg
Jack & Robin Bierkorte
Margie Book
Mark Bowers
Ken Byerly
Ned & Judi Caughey
Guy Alan & Jane Clark
Janica Davis
Bill & Tammy Deemer
Frank Delduca
Tom & Clydene Duran
Bernadette & George Farah
Mike & Evelyn Fowles
Jaimee Greenawalt
Connie & Jim Hallam
Janet Halle
Len & Linda Hess
Robert Jackman
Jacobs Creek Watershed Association
William & Vicky Judd
Bob & Angie Kamenic
Hope King
Carl & Rose Kish
Barbara Kochaniak
Susan & Timothy Kraus
Charles Kuchta
Tom & Janet Kuehl
Mary Lawrence
Marian Mandella
Glenn & Mabel Matteson
Dale & Xina Matuza
Joanne McIlhattan

Nancy Murphy
Pauline Petrucci
Bob Ross
Linda & Gene Sasso
Diane Scott
Walter & Dana Shaffer
Shirley Spindle
Linda Stafford
Eleanor Stanton

We also welcome new members – 2013

Janet Armstrong - Greensburg
Daniel & Sylvia Barton – Mt. Pleasant
Robin Bierkorte - Jeannette
Renee & Eric Dadey - Greensburg
Bill & Tammy Deemer – Turtlecreek
Michael Hyczyk - Yukon
Lucinda Dietz - Bovard
Carol Jaworski – McMurray
Marian Mandella – Stahlstown
Jason Pigan – Murrysville
Bill Powers - Murrysville
Carol Triano - Jeannette
Beverly Young – Greensburg

Birder of Yore continued...

that though my especial puzzles were thus explained, dozens, scores, nay, hundreds of other difficulties lay in the path, which would require an amount of knowledge, to be derived from experiment, observation, and close reasoning, of which I could form no notion, before this key to the “mystery of mysteries” could be said to be perfected, but I was convinced a *vera causa* had been found, and that by its aid one of the greatest secrets of creation was going to be unlocked. I lost no time in drawing the attention of some of my friends. In some quarters I failed to attract notice...but I was not discouraged in consequence and I never doubted for one moment, then nor since, that we had one of the grandest discoveries of the age – a discovery all the more grand because it was so simple!

Could anyone have acknowledged the beauty and simplicity of Darwin's theory of Natural Selection any better? Newton was the first ornithologist to apply that theory to ornithological problems. He went on to become professor of Zoology at Cambridge. His published works earned him the gratitude of the great naturalist himself. In a letter to Newton, dated Feb. 9, 1870:

Dear Newton, I suppose it would be universally held extremely wrong for a defendant to write to a Judge to express his satisfaction at a judgment in his favour; and

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