



BIRDING CLUB DELAWARE COUNTY

November 2007
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The Birding Club of Delaware County is a birding club Located in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, with the purpose of expanding individual interest in and study of wild birds.

The Birding Club of Delaware County is open to birders and bird watchers of all skill levels.

Membership is from September through August.

Meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of each month from September through June at the Marple Township Library Meeting Room. Meetings begin at 7:30PM.

Guests are always welcome.

For additional information regarding membership, please contact John D'Amico at 610-566-1461 or email membership@bcdelco.org.

Websites
BCDC: www.bcdelco.org
RTPHW: www.rtphawkwatch.org

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NEWSLETTER

From the President...

BCDC Newsletter needs you!

Our on-line Newsletter provides us with several opportunities to showcase our club and its members. We now have the ability to publish more photographs, both of club activities and from your personal adventures. There is also added space for regular features, and I'm hoping members will step forward and volunteer to author a regular column. There is interest in a **beginner birder forum**, a **backyard birding column**, **bird identification**, **birding sites** – both near and far, a **members profile column**, **book reviews** and a report on **recent sightings**. If you have taken an interesting birding trip and would like to share it with the club, this is your opportunity - and please consider including **your photos**. Please contact editor Chris Blidan or me (president@bcdelco.org) if want to contribute to the newsletter or have an idea for a regular feature.

Rose Tree Park Hawkwatch Welcomes Your Support!



The Rose Tree Park Hawkwatch (RTPHW) is moving into its tenth year. As with most long-term projects there is an ebb and flow of participants. Currently RTPHW is in ebb and is in need of not only counters but also observers. Okay, you ask, what is the difference between a counter and an observer. The **counter** is the "official counter" for that day, the person responsible for keeping the official record and tabulations. An **observer** is someone who assists in finding and identifying the birds. On days of heavy flights, when many birds can be in the air at once, the counter depends on the observers for assistance in

keeping track of the passing birds.

Due to an unexpected transfer, RTPHW lost one of its veteran counters this season, and several "open dates" have had to be covered by the already lean staff. In addition, the number of observers, especially during the week, has tailed off. The RTPHW staff has a wonderful rapport with several high school environmental classes that come out every season to learn about hawk migration. It is especially during these instructional days that RTPHW needs the extra assistance. Please consider volunteering as a counter and visit often as an observer in this splendid Citizen/ Science Project of the Birding Club of Delaware County.

BCDC FIELD TRIPS

IMPORTANT NOTES

Please contact trip leader in advance so you can be notified of any changes.
Plan to arrive 15 minutes prior to departure time.

November 10, Saturday - Bake Oven Knob with the Wyncote Bird Club
8:30 am. Meet at the Bake Oven Knob parking lot
Leader Andy Fayer (215-542-8114)

November 25, Sunday - Lakes of Chester County
7:00 am. Meet at Boscov's parking lot in Exton for a 3/4-day trip (bring lunch).
Leader Holly Merker (610-733-4392)

December 1, Saturday - Annual Brigantine to Barnegat Trip
8:00 am. Meet at the Brigantine NWR parking lot
Leader Tom McParland (610-583-9016)

December 15, Saturday - Glenolden Christmas Count
Delaware County, PA
Coordinator Nick Pulcinella (610-696-0687)

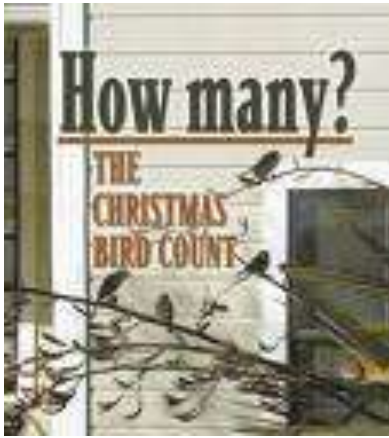
January 1, Tuesday - **Annual New Year's Day Delaware Coast Trip**
6:00 am SHARP. Meet at McDonald's parking lot in Marcus Hook (Rtes. 452 and I-95)
Leader Al Guarente (610-566-8266)

Check website at www.bcdelco.org for add-ons or cancellations.

Field Trip Coordinator: Bill Roache (610-789-6269)



BCDC
10th Anniversary Banquet
Wednesday, April 16, 2008
Speaker: Kevin Karlson
Springfield Country Club



Counting Birds at Christmas Time

By Nick Pulcinella

The Delaware County (Glenolden) Christmas Bird Count takes place on Saturday, December 15, 2007. The Glenolden Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is one of hundreds that will be carried out throughout North America during the three-week period beginning December 15 under the sponsorship of the National Audubon Society. The CBC is one of the largest citizen-science projects conducted by Audubon.

Our local CBC is named after Glenolden, the town where the count originated in 1922; however, the 15-mile diameter count circle encompasses most of Delaware County. The circle includes the John Heinz NWR, Tyler Arboretum, Ridley Creek State Park, the Darlington Tract, the Delaware River from Fort Mifflin south to the Delaware state line, and the Darby, Crum and Chester Creek watersheds. Our count averages 100 species and that total is usually in the top five of the 60+ counts held in Pennsylvania.

Participation is easy. About 22 separate parties cover the count circle. Some parties consist of one or two people, but most have three or four birders. Each party aims to count every bird identified within its designated area. If you are interested in participating in this year's CBC, please contact me *soon* at president@bcdelco.org or 610-696-0687. To see results of previous Glenolden CBCs visit <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/>

Coming Programs

November 14, 2007

Wayne Laubscher

***Gray Ghosts and Other Northwoods Owls -
Winter Birds of Algonquin***

December 12, 2007

Jim Lockyer

Hawk Watch Roundup 2007 - Holiday Party

January 9, 2008

Hank Kaestner

Kazakhstan

We welcome members' contributions to our newsletter, so if you have reports, announcements, reviews, poetry, or essays that would be of interest to our BCDC birding community, please submit them to the editor:

Chris Blidan, e-mail: newsletter@bcdelco.org (phone: 610-566-0937).

The deadline for the January newsletter is Wednesday, December 26, 2007.



The Big Sit

By Holly Merker & Nick Pulcinella



The **Tall-Tale Flycatchers** and the **Rose Tree Redtails** were at it again on Sunday, October 14. These two separate teams of BCDC members took on the challenges of the Big Sit, an international event sponsored yearly on the second Sunday in October by *Birdwatcher's Digest*. The aim for all teams was to count every species seen or heard from within a 17-foot diameter circle in a 24-hour period. Besides the two BCDC teams, eight other Big Sit locations were reported in Pennsylvania.

This year's Flycatchers were Nick and Sharon Pulcinella and Al Guarantee, observing from the Pulcinella backyard in West Chester. They tallied 52 species, just two short of their record set last year. Nick describes their viewing area as "a

s u b u r b a n backyard a little less than an acre with numerous native plantings and a man-made re-circulating stream and pond. We have mostly a north and westward view of the sky, though standing at the far western edge of the circle and looking back over the roof of the house will provide a partial view of the eastern sky. The tall trees hinder a long look at anything flying past, so we needed to be on our toes to identify any flybys."

This year's Redtails (at the hawkwatch site in Rose Tree Park) included RTPHW counters and observers, as well as interested visitors. Their count totaled 47 species, down from last year's tally of 50. Coordinator Holly Merker reports,

"Creating a festive atmosphere, Jim Lockyer brought out his "exhibition tent" to provide a shady place to rest. Inside the tent we hung some posters, made by Jamie Pugliese, to give passersby an idea of what the festivities were all about. Participants brought many goodies and snacks to share, and the tent was the hotspot for sneaking a homemade cookie, or chips and salsa in between birds."

In West Chester, the only pre-dawn observation was a pair of calling Great Horned Owls. The morning light brought with it many species in rapid succession and within the first 15 minutes of daylight, 14 species were recorded, including both kinglets. Between 7:00 and 8:00 am, they found



another 18 species including Yellow-rumped Warbler, Cedar Waxwing, the first of the day's nine Purple Finches, one of three Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Blue-headed Vireo and Black-capped Chickadees. Activity quieted down for a bit when an adult Sharp-shinned Hawk perched in a nearby tree.

In the next hour, the WC team picked up three species of blackbirds: Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle and Brown-headed Cowbirds, while at least 8-10 Tree Swallows passed by. Around 9:30, Al spotted a pair of Chipping Sparrows in one of the white pines and a few minutes later a male

(Continued on page 5)

(The Big Sit: Continued from page 4)

Black-throated Blue Warbler visited the stream. Nick was very excited to see a Pigeon streak through because despite the many hours he spends watching birds in the backyard, he can probably count on one hand the number of Pigeons he has seen. The 10-11 am hour brought some quality birds: Black Vulture, two adult Bald Eagles, a small flock of calling Fish Crows and Cooper's and Red-tailed Hawks. Al then caught sight of two Chimney Swifts before they quickly disappeared behind the trees. At about the same time, Nick heard a calling Pine Siskin, which they eventually found among a small flock of goldfinches at the top of the white pine. The bird eventually worked its way down to one of the thistle feeders where it gave everyone great looks. Around noon, Al spotted a soaring American Kestrel, soon followed by another, bring the Tall-tale Flycatchers to a morning total of 49 species.

Meanwhile, over at Rose Tree Park, the team there had gotten off to a slightly later start. Even so, the Big Sit provides a great opportunity to really get to know the birds around us, as sitters are carefully looking and listening to everything that passes by. Most days at the hawkwatch, birders try to keep an eye out for all species of note that fly over, but since they are there primarily to look for raptors, they may not always pay attention to the more common species that are often present. This means that on the Big Sit day, even the first American Robin or Mourning Dove to fly over stirs up excitement.

The Rose Tree Redtails won't complain about being down three birds from last year because the weather conditions this season have largely featured southwest winds and a slower migration in general. They did add Peregrine Falcon and Eastern Phoebe to the list (both new birds for the count), but missed a few they expected to get, such as Red-breasted Nuthatch (which had been present daily) and Broad-winged Hawk (which were still moving through in singletons that week).

After a busy morning, activity in West Chester dropped

off rapidly with only one new bird for the noon hour – a male Dark-eyed Junco. The team would periodically send their dog Layla to run through the bushes to flush any rails, wheatears, wrynecks or Sandhill Cranes that might be lurking about, and they checked all passing flocks of geese for any small ones or white ones, and when things got really boring, they counted how many peanuts a Blue Jay could stuff down its gullet in one visit to the feeder – the record was nine!

Around 2:00 pm, a Brown Creeper showed up for a few minutes in a crabapple tree. Near 3:30 pm, an unfamiliar chip note alerted the sitters to a male Pine Warbler which showed up at the head of the stream and proceeded to bathe. This was only the fourth sighting of this species for the yard. That was species #52 and despite its best efforts, the team couldn't find another new bird for the day.

Nick believes he would be remiss if he did not mention some of the other flying objects the Tall-tale Flycatchers spotted: "We saw many, many jet aircraft, including two of my favorites, KLM and Air Lingus, and four helium balloons, including two from Weichart Reality. Oh yeah, since it was also the day of the ROTO FEST at the nearby helicopter museum, helicopters were buzzing around all day giving free rides, and near dusk our roof was nearly peeled away by one low flying military Chinook that sent both me and the dog running for cover. We also witnessed five skydivers free-falling from a circling helicopter around noon and again at 3PM. It is really quite bizarre to watch humans jump out of an open door of a helicopter through a 30x scope."

All in all, it was another successful Big Sit and both teams are eagerly awaiting the next one. The Rose Tree Redtails hope to make this an annual event at the park, and they look forward to more club members joining in the fun!

To view a complete list of BCDC team sightings that day, as well as other counts around the world, visit: www.birdwatchersdigest.com, click on Birding Fun, and select Big Sit! from the menu.

Reminder about BCDC Fellowship Nominations

The Board of Directors of the Birding Club of Delaware County awards fellowships to give special recognition to BCDC members who exemplify our club's stated goal of expanding individual interest in and study of wild birds. Nominations for BCDC Fellows of 2008 are due by December 31, 2007. Please submit your nominations in the form of a letter (either on paper or by email) to Secretary Janis Zane.

BCDC Secretary Janis Zane (secretary@bcdelco.org) 420 Ivy Lane, Glen Mills PA 19342

BIRDING CLUB DELAWARE COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA



MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The *Birding Club of Delaware County (BCDC)* is open to birders (bird-watchers) of all levels and interests. The club provides a nurturing environment for both novice and expert birders who share the common interest of recreational birding.

Membership in the BCDC will provide an opportunity to bird and learn with some of the most capable birders in our area.

The BCDC has regular monthly meetings from September through June each year featuring noted speakers and birding programs. Bird walks and field trips are offered to members on a frequent and regular basis.

The BCDC also sponsors and supports citizen science projects including the Rose Tree Park HawkWatch (RTPHW) which is conducted each spring and fall at Rose Tree Park, Media, PA during the raptor migration periods.

BCDC meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month (September through May with the June meeting being a picnic meeting at Ridley Creek State

Park) at the Marple Township Library Meeting Room in Broomall, PA at 7:30PM (see map). Guests are always welcome.

For further information regarding the BCDC and its activities please visit our websites:



Birding Club of Delaware County
www.bcdelco.org

Rose Tree Park HawkWatch
www.rtphawkwatch.org

A BCDC membership runs from September through August of the following year. A membership application is provided below. Simply make your check out to BCDC, fill in the application and return it with your check to John D'Amico, 1841 Kimberwick Road, Media, PA 19063.

For additional information regarding BCDC membership, please contact:
John D'Amico, 610.566.1461, jsdam3@verizon.net

For additional information regarding the Rose Tree Park HawkWatch, please contact:
Jim Lockyer, 610.565.2873, jim@rtphawkwatch.org

Become a member of the BCDC today and start enjoying the benefits tomorrow.



Membership Application

New Renewal

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Phone Home _____ Work _____

Email address _____

- Membership Type
- Sustaining - \$50
 - Supporting - \$40
 - Family - \$30
 - Individual - \$20

Please make your check payable to **BCDC** and send to: **John D'Amico, BCDC Membership, 1841 Kimberwick Road, Media, PA 19063**