

# CHICKADEE CHATTER

Newsletter of the Lycoming Audubon Society (LAS)

March - April 2011

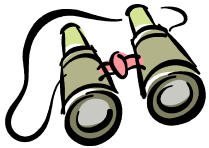
## UPCOMING EVENTS

**March 23, 2011 — 7:30 p.m.**

**"Wild Africa"** with Carol and Charles Hildebrand of LAS. We will visit some of the diverse environments of Africa in Botswana, Zambia, and Rwanda and take a look at the animals and birds that live in these environments. In addition, we will discuss some of the very difficult conservation issues these countries are facing as they try to balance the needs of their people versus the needs of wildlife.



**Saturday, March 26th — FIELD TRIP— 9 a.m.** Rose Vally Lake Waterfowl Watch; meet at the south boat launch, 9 AM. Dress for the weather, bring binoculars and/or scopes.



**Saturday, April 9th - FIELD TRIP — 9:00 a.m.** Peregrine Watch at Montgomery cliff site; meet Mike Kuriga at the Montgomery sewage treatment plant, at 9 AM. Contact Mike for further information and directions [via email](#) or cell phone: (570) 971-1393.

**April 27, 2011 — "Hawk Watching"** with Greg Grove and Nick Bolgiano. Greg and Nick are from the Centre County area and last year published the updated *"Birds of Central Pennsylvania, after Merrill Wood with additional contributors"*. They will have copies of the book available.

**MORE programming on page 2....**

## WITH MUCH SADNESS,....

I am sorry to have to inform you all but on Saturday, February 19<sup>th</sup>, TJ died due to unknown circumstances.

We had just put on a program for the good folks at Plymouth Meeting Audubon near Philadelphia the night before and we were heading to Richmond VA, for a Court of Honor Scout program. I noticed his problem at 7:00 a.m. and by 9:00 a.m. he was dead. Up until Saturday morning, TJ showed no signs of any problems, whatsoever, so it was a real shock to say the least.



There is an ongoing necropsy to determine the exact cause of death, but the preliminary report showed a very enlarged liver with white spots and enlarged kidneys. And the real shocker of all is — the HE was really a SHE! And at 8½ pounds a very small female Bald Eagle at that.

I will put together a detailed report for the next newsletter and hopefully by that time the lab results will be available.

Thank you to the many who have given me kind words at this time, and to those who have witnessed the magnificent close encounter, I was honored to be able to present TJ to you.

Sincerely,

*Michael W. Kuriga*

**Please remember.....our NEW meeting location.....!!**

**[Old Lycoming Township  
Fire Station Social Hall  
1600 Dewey Avenue  
Williamsport, PA](#)**

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT...

Spring, or at least the vernal equinox, is just a couple of weeks away, and for many it will be a welcome relief to what has been a fairly 'normal' winter. The last few have been mild and we have accustomed ourselves to little snow. Thankfully we have mostly avoided the larger snowfalls that hit further east and north. As winter melts away and the daylight grows longer we look forward to the spring migration.

We have enjoyed meeting in the dining hall at Little League headquarters for many years, and we are very grateful for their hospitality. Because of a necessary change in their facility use policies, we are no longer able to meet there, and after a trying search we have decided to use the Old Lycoming Township Volunteer Fire Company Social Hall for the remainder of the year. The social hall has plenty of parking

adjacent to the building, and the location is right off the Dewey Avenue exit of Route 15 and across the street from the Sunoco station and A-Plus convenience store.

With spring we will have numerous opportunities for volunteer work at familiar locations. The bluebird boxes at Canfield Island, the Game Commission wetlands and Rider Park will need to be checked and cleaned, the butterfly and hummingbird garden at Rider Park can always use some freshening, and we will once again be picking up roadside litter as participants in PennDOT's Adopt-a-Highway program. There will be volunteer sign-up sheets at the front table at the Social Hall, and when some work is planned we will contact you.

*Dan Alters*



### **Programming continued.....**

**Saturday, May 14th, 2011 — PA Migration Count**, a 24-hour count, counting all birds seen/heard in Lycoming Co; contact Wes at 584-3107 or [via email](#) to participate.

**May 25, 2011 — TUREEN DINNER**  
**Dave Brinker** of the Maryland DNR will present a program about the **Appalachian Goshawk Project** which he conducts annually in Maryland, West Virginia and Pennsylvania.



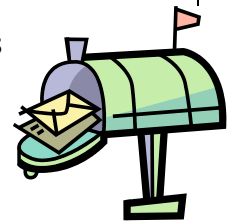
As always, everyone brings a "dish to share",...along with their own tableware and utensils. Beverages will be furnished.

Dinner at 6:00 pm with program to follow. Old Lycoming Township Fire Station Social Hall, 1600 Dewey Avenue, Williamsport.



### **ADDRESS CHANGES AND ERRORS**

It is important for all members that change their address or temporarily have their mail forwarded, to notify Audubon of those changes. The Postal Service does not normally forward our newsletters, which are sent via bulk mail, and we are charged 44 cents every time one is returned. This is also the case if we have a bad address for you from the national office, which happens more frequently than we would like. **If we have anything incorrect, you don't get your copy of Audubon, you want to help us save \$ and get your newsletter via email, or other membership issues, please drop us [an email](#)** or a note to: PO Box 4053, Williamsport, PA 17701-0653. We'll get it corrected.



Website to watch the hummingbirds!!! The Ruby-throats have begun their migration back for the nesting season....Watch their progress at: [www.hummingbirds.net/map.html](http://www.hummingbirds.net/map.html)

## 2011 GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

From February 18 to February 21, bird lovers across the U.S. and Canada participated in the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). Here in Pennsylvania, a total of 4,360 separate reports were submitted as of February 26, and 126 different species were observed. Among the most interesting species included one Snowy Owl, one Grey Catbird, one Osprey and two Northern Goshawks. Starlings, blackbirds, and geese were the most numerous species across the state. There were 141 Bald Eagles, 16 Peregrines, 71 Snow Buntings, and 1,007 Purple Finches.



Locally, there were 15 reports from Williamsport, 6 from Jersey Shore, and 4 from Lock Haven, with a total of 868 individual birds. The first day, Feb. 18, featured record-breaking high temperatures in the 60s°F, but that night and the second day were very windy which likely kept most species under cover on the 19th. Our heaviest snowfall of February occurred on the night of the 20th and 21st, which probably also reduced numbers on the final day.

In Williamsport, the most numerous species was House Finch (with 130 birds), followed closely by American Crow (120). Starlings, House Sparrows, and American Goldfinch rounded out the top five. An impressive 23 Eastern Bluebirds were spotted. At Jersey Shore, Dark-eyed Juncos (41), American Goldfinch (35) and Black-capped Chickadees (10) were the top three species observed, whereas at Lock Haven, Juncos (21), Mourning Doves (18) and House Sparrows (11) were most common.

The GBBC is a joint project offered by National Audubon, The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and Bird Studies Canada. If you weren't able to participate in the GBBC this year, hopefully you will be able to take part in February 2012. A wealth of data is available for towns, states, and the entire U.S. and Canada at [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc).

*Jim Green*



### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We would like to welcome the following new National and Chapter members who recently joined or rejoined Audubon. Thanks for your support!

Thomas N. Batchelor  
Shuman Bickel  
Deborah Dietrick  
Dennis Dusza  
Ronald & Cynthia Eister  
John Fischer  
Patty Gohrs  
Judy A. Green

Nellie R. Greenaway  
Dennis & Kathleen Hazlak  
Thomas H. Krouse  
Nancy Mahaffey  
Jane Major  
Angela Meyer  
Gary Mowery  
Candy Nevel

William Nichols  
R. Patterson  
Dennis Schwenk  
Sharon Stine  
Kathleen Tanner  
Marla Wadsworth  
Beth Zbegner



### WILDLIFE OUTREACH WEB-CENTER at <http://extension.psu.edu/wildlife>

The Wildlife Outreach Web-center, or WOW, offers in-depth information on a variety of wildlife topics ranging from habitat enhancement to controlling nuisance and damage problems that occasionally occur between people and wildlife. Visitors also can find the names of agencies and individuals across the state that can help resolve issues ranging from the skunk under the deck to the injured bird in the backyard. Downloadable fact sheets are included for most topics.

The site administered by Penn State Cooperative Extension Service, College of Agricultural Sciences.

## GAME COMMISSION LOOKING FOR REPORTS OF DEAD BARN OWLS



HARRISBURG - Pennsylvania Game Commission wildlife biologists are seeking information from the general public about dead barn owls that may have succumbed to starvation during the long periods of snow and ice that covered much of Pennsylvania this winter. Information can be submitted to the Game Commission's Region Offices....(see below.)

"Because of the length of time that much of the Commonwealth has had snow on the ground with a hard crust, barn owls have had an extremely difficult time attempting to catch meadow voles, which are their primary prey," said Dan Mummert, Game Commission Southeast Region Wildlife Diversity Biologist and regional coordinator of the agency's Barn Owl Conservation Initiative. "Therefore, we currently are in what is likely the highest annual period of mortality for these owls. We need landowners' cooperation in reporting any dead barn owls, especially those barn owls that have been banded, so we can learn more about such things as fledgling dispersal, habitat usage, causes of mortality and average lifespan."

Since 2006, Game Commission Regional Wildlife Diversity Biologists have banded 781 barn owls and have confirmed nesting at 138 different nest sites throughout the state. So far, agency biologists have had 32 band recoveries, of which, half were returned during winter.

"Many of the barn owls were recovered soon after conditions we recently experienced; long lasting snow cover with icy crust," Mummert said. "A good percentage of the remaining band returns were from young fledglings recovered dead near their natal nest site."

For more information on barn owls, visit the Game Commission website at [www.pgc.state.pa.us](http://www.pgc.state.pa.us), and click on "Wildlife" in the menu bar at the top of the homepage, then click on "Barn Owl Conservation Initiative" in the "Wild Birds and Birding" section."

Northcentral Region Office, P.O. Box 5038, Jersey Shore, PA 17740. 570-398-4744. Serves: Cameron, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Elk, Lycoming, McKean, Potter, Tioga, and Union counties.

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### LYCOMING AUDUBON'S OWN HIGHWAY BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT

Signage along a two mile stretch of Old Route 220 between Montoursville and the Lycoming Mall identifies **Lycoming Audubon** as the Department of Transportation's partner in maintaining the highway. After a hiatus of a couple of years, an intrepid band of volunteers from our chapter will be out policing litter along the roadway this season. The DOT will supply us with trash bags, gloves, safety vests and litter crew safety signs, and they will pick up the collected trash for final disposal.



Our "good deeds" will be done four times this year, beginning in April with the last cleanup in early October. Each session typically takes an hour or so, depending on the number of volunteers. To date we have ten volunteers, and we could use a few more to make sure adequate man and woman power is available on each selected date. **Please contact Gary Metzger at 570-435-5368** if you could help with any or all of the cleanups. What better way to combine a little good exercise with the satisfaction of cleaning up a bit of our beautiful countryside! Who knows, maybe we'll see one of those grand Bald Eagles that soar up and down the valley following the Susquehanna!

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### A NATURE TRAIL AT LYSOCK VIEW

Lycoming County Audubon was recently contacted by the office of the County Commissioners, regarding a nature/conservation learning trail at the County Farm (Lysock View). They invited LAS to accompany them on a walk-through of the proposed trail, which will wind through the small woodlot on the farm property, and asked for any insights that would be helpful as they proceed with the project. Larry Waltz, Ron Beach and Wes Egli accompanied Jeff Wheeland and eight "Lysock folks" one day in late January.

Several bluebirds were enjoying the CREP buffer nearby, and arrangements have been made for a local Boy Scout troop to build and install blue bird houses. LAS will help with this on March 12th.

## BIGWOODS WILDLIFE RESCUE CENTER.....NEEDS HELP

Bigwoods Wildlife Rescue Clinic, is located in Tamarack, Clinton County, about eight miles above Renovo. It is run by the clinic founder and owner, Kristina Franklin. Kristina, who was our speaker at the February meeting, is a friend to all animals, providing ailing wildlife a second chance when they have been brought to her for help. For nearly nine years, Franklin has been rehabilitating animals.

**But now, the rescue clinic itself is looking for some help. The nonprofit [501(c)3] organization is in need of donations and supplies in order to continuing to care for sick and injured wildlife. Kristina disclosed that the rescue clinic will have to close before year's end, if she is unable to acquire some financial assistance.**

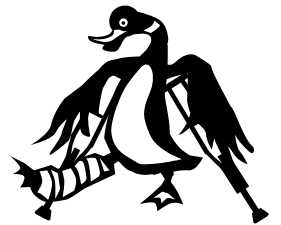
All donations and/or contributions to BWWRC are solely used to care for the animals. There are many meals of various special foods and formulas that are used daily. There are also the expenses of medicines, medical supplies and equipment, special vet costs, caging and equipment, office supplies, and the necessary utility expenses for the center. There is no 'paid' staff. Her only full time assistant is her mother.

All species of wildlife are accepted at the clinic. If for some reason the clinic is unable to take an animal, an appropriate rehabilitator and facility are be found. Once the animal is healed and rehabilitated, it is released back into its natural habitat.

The clinic does not transport animals, but asks the public to bring them to the clinic or to make arrangements to bring them. The clinic sees an average of between 200 and 250 animals per year and is often busier in the spring.

Spring brings in many babies of all species, which are raised until grown and ready to be on their own. That involves being a mother to a whole lot of species! She has had some success with other animals "adopting" an orphan and teaching it the life lessons it needs. Mid to late summer often brings in second or third litters and broods.

In the fall and winter, she receives quite a few owls and hawks of all kinds. Many have gone near roads to hunt and get hit or bumped by a vehicle. She brought two adult Screech Owls,...one grey phase, one red phase, each with only one "good" eye, to show the audience. The grey phase owl will be released, since he/she has demonstrated that it can hunt and secure it's own food. The amount of vision that the red phase owl has is still undetermined.



Franklin completed extensive seminars and testing and worked under the supervision of another licensed rehabilitator for a two years before being interviewed by the Pennsylvania Council of Wildlife Rehabilitation. After successfully completing a series of tests, she was issued a license and permit by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

Wildlife rehabilitation is not a paid profession and there certainly is not a profit from it, but the rewards in itself. One must have an ongoing passion and commitment, 24-7 and 365 days a year, as well as ongoing knowledge and experience.

"If we could find five or six people willing to commit to \$100 a month, we would be in better shape," Franklin said. "We want to be here for the wildlife to give them a second chance, your donations will make that possible." The public is also encouraged to come in to the center and check up on the animals they are helping to support.

Anyone interested in making a monetary contribution can send a check to:

Bigwoods Wildlife Rescue Clinic Inc.  
2 Larsen's Lane  
Renovo, PA 17764

Or call (570) 923-0114 or e-mail [Kristina Franklin](mailto:Kristina.Franklin@bigwoods.org).

## GARDENING FOR BIRDS: A BOOK REVIEW

Over the winter, I read an informative and entertaining book that everyone who values the health of our flora and fauna should read. You may be surprised to learn that this book is not about birds! It is about gardening and is titled "Insects and Gardens: In Pursuit of a Garden Ecology", written by entomologist Eric Grissell. The version I read was published in 2001, though a more recent paperback edition was published in 2006.

What I most liked about "Insects and Gardens" is the author's emphasis on the 'balance of nature', which of course benefits birds and other wildlife. Insects, as we know, are preferred food for many bird species and virtually all birds feed their young insects during the breeding season. Grissell dedicated the book to Rachel Carson and provides many colorful, high-quality close-up photographs of insects.

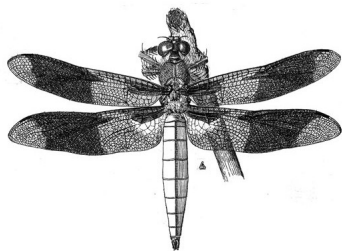
"Insects and Gardens" correlates well with the Audubon At Home conservation program, which focuses our attention on our own properties. The book is divided into three parts. Part I is titled "Lives of the Insects". Here we learn what *is* and what *is not* an insect, the different scientific Orders for insects, survival and feeding types, and insects' development, social and sexual behavior. Aah, what's a good book without a little sex!!!

Part II is "The Ecology of Gardening" and includes detail on the interactions between (a) different types of insects and (b) between insects and plants, as well as the 'functions' of insects in gardens. Most of us know that pollination is a key function of butterflies, moths, and bees, and from an avian point of view, insects provide an important 'food' function, but how many of us would think of the very important role insects play in decomposition? Plants die, as do insects and other animals. A number of insect species play crucial roles in reducing these 'waste' products. Termites in the garden, for example, recycle decaying organic materials which then nourish the soil. In this section, I learned that dragonflies and damselflies, perhaps my favorite insect species, prey on mosquitoes (not one of my favorite species!) and other small flying insects.

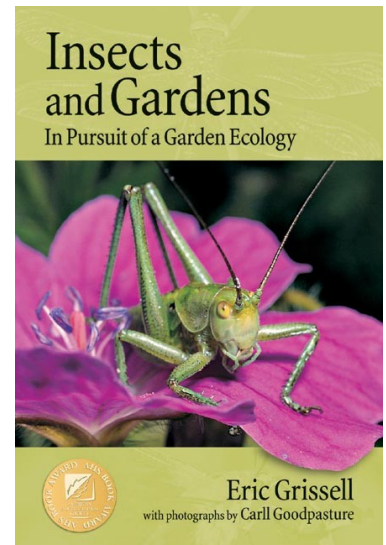
Finally, in Part III, Grissell focuses on "Insects and Humans: The Gardener's Perspective". This section is actually a summary of holistic principles of appreciating insects that the author builds on throughout his book.

Grissell maintains that most gardeners, including himself, have no idea of what is taking place in our gardens. Oh, yes, we do know what grows in our gardens. Yet we are ignorant of the great variety and number of insects outside our windows, unless we notice leaf damage on one of our beloved plants! When that happens, gardeners often resort to chemical warfare which often does more harm to the 'beneficial insects' than to the 'bad insects'.

The author refers over and over to a 'balanced garden', which means a garden with **great** diversity. A diversity of plant species as well as diverse mini-habitats (varying degrees of shade vs. sunlight) will attract many more insect species than will a sunny garden with only a few plant species. The more types of insects there are, the less likely that any one insect species will become a serious garden pest. Plant diversity will increase animal diversity; not just insects, but also bats, birds, frogs, lizards, etc., and these species will help prevent any one insect species from becoming dominant.



Lawns, of course, are not diverse and are regularly disturbed (do you really think your power mower doesn't kill insects?), and so lawns do not fit into Grissell's idea of a balanced garden. But, twigs and dead leaves left on the ground rate high! That's because leaf litter and the twigs of shrubs and trees provide homes for insects to spend the winter. Many insects that are predators of other insects thrive in mulch



and 'yard debris'. Grissell states that "The worst possible scenario we gardeners create with our bare-earth policy is that of decoupling the (insect) predators and parasitoids from their prey". (Grissell, p. 248) In other words, being too tidy in our gardens destroys many beneficial insects.

Other things I learned from this frequently humorous book were:

- Only female mosquitoes bite.
- Most solitary bees, predatory wasps, and parasitic wasps don't sting.
- Butterfly boxes are a waste of money.
- Many insects are beautiful.

You can easily order "Insects and Gardens" from online book retailers, request it from your local bookstore, or look for it in your local library. In the coming weeks, we will again experience that incredible explosion of plant growth and insect populations. Let's all try to appreciate insects more!

Grissell, Eric (2001 & 2006), *Insects and Gardens: In Pursuit of a Garden Ecology*; Timber Press, Inc.

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**ISBN-13:** 978-0881927689

*Jim Green*

**Images in this article:**

[Front cover of 2006 paperback version of "Insects and Gardens" from the Timber Press, Inc. website.](#)

Dragonfly: Copyright © [Smithsonian Institution](#); artist: [Art Cushman](#)



## WINTER BIRDS

Mid-February in the sunroom with a cup of hot tea, with birds aplenty around and under the seed and suet feeders. The late winter sun is strengthening, but it is in the low 20s outside with a good foot of heavily crusted snow blanketing lawn, woods and pasture. For the past week or so we have been watching deer walking around mid-day, on top of the crust, looking for food. Yesterday a nice ten point buck was among them, hanging onto those prized antlers late this season!



All the critters are hungry this time of year. The regular visitors are swarming around the feeders. Hairy, downy and red-bellied woodpeckers, nuthatches and titmice seek out the suet, while sparrows, chickadees, and goldfinches dig goodies out of the feeder openings. Cardinals, juncos, doves, crows and most of the others take turns cleaning up spillage on the ground under the feeders. The ear corn feeder provides vittles for blue jays, woodpeckers and of course the inevitable gang of gray squirrels. I'd like to say that the squirrels stick with the corn, but truth be told they often displace most of the birds under the other feeders. Their size and disposition just make most of the birds reluctant to share the space. Finally, for the past several weeks we have been delighted to have a couple of redpolls and three pine siskins sharing the tube feeder with our goldfinches. Nice!

At some point this particular morning I notice that the birds have gone scarce. As I scan the scene I quickly see the reason, a small hawk sitting atop the big woodpile in the edge of the woods below the lane. I grab the binoculars and Peterson Field Guide and soon determine that it's an immature Coopers Hawk. What a beauty! He apparently has some small birds of some sort trapped in the brush beneath his feet, and he's sure he can get to them. His strategy seems to be to hop/flap furiously from one end of the pile to the other, hoping to panic the little guys into flushing out, and onto Mr. Hawk's dinner spread. I watch these antics for a good five minutes, and all I see is one frightened junco scooting out the far side of the pile when the hawk is at this end. That may have been the only prospective meal in there, because shortly after it made its escape the Coopers soared off down through the woods, hopefully to find some more cooperative meal elsewhere. I feed the little birds, the raptors occasionally share in the bounty, and the rhythm of life goes on. Life is good in Mr. Penn's winter woods!

*Gary Metzger*



## BIRD OBSERVATIONS



The first wave of "Spring" migrants have already begun to pass by my home in Old Lycoming Township. On February 18<sup>th</sup> a flock of 15 male Red-winged Blackbirds attacked my feeders. That same day, reports on PABirds from around the state announced Red-winged Blackbirds on the move. In addition to the blackbirds, waterfowl are slowly pushing northward and this should be a great year to find ducks on the river since all the lakes and ponds in the region may be frozen solid through March and possibly into April.



Photo supplied by Wayne Laubscher

Since our last report in January there have been some interesting birding sightings from around the region. On February 4<sup>th</sup>, Wayne Laubscher reported two wing-tagged Trumpeter Swans on Bald Eagle Creek near Castenea in Clinton County. These birds were part of a reintroduction program in Canada.

Early in the month Anne Harris Katz raised a concern about a lack of goldfinches, which proved to be mostly a localized issue since many folks reported lots of goldfinches at their feeding stations. The most interesting report came in from Dan Alters who reported many goldfinches along with an Eastern Towhee that wintered at his home.

At Rider Park, Ron Beach has been reporting some Pine Siskins, Purple Finch and he also spotted a Northern Shrike. Thanks Ron for maintaining those feeders at the park; and if you haven't been to Rider Park it's an amazing setting to watch birds. If you're lucky you might get to see the shrike or an accipiter nail a bird at the feeder. Although there weren't too many northern finches reported this winter, I did luck into a flock of 100 Redpolls near my cabin in Whetham in Clinton County.

Winter Raptor Surveys had mixed results in February. Joe Yoder and Meredith Lombard had an amazing day in the Montgomery and Elimsport area with 9 Rough-Legged Hawks, 2 Northern Harriers, 21 Red-Tailed Hawks,, 1 Black Vulture, 8 American Kestrels, and 1 Bald Eagle. They also watched one of those kestrels eating a rodent. The rest of us (Fred Stiner, Wes Egli, Nate Fronk and myself) found very few raptors on our WRS in other parts of the county.

On February 15<sup>th</sup>, Jim Green reported the first flock of Vultures over Williamsport and Jim thought possibly they were Black Vultures, which are becoming increasingly more common these days. Two days later, Wes Egli reported 2 Turkey Vultures (TVs) over Picture Rocks. On February 18<sup>th</sup>, Larry Waltz reported Bald Eagles active at the nest site at Little Pine State Park, and Linda Frye reported dozens of TVs over the Harrisburg area in addition to hundreds of gulls. She also reported 6 Tundra Swans, 2 falcons and 3-4 Coots on the river at McElhattan.

Meredith and Joe had another great report on February 16<sup>th</sup> from the river where they found White-Winged Scoters near the Market Street bridge along with many Common Mergansers, Bufflehead, and Mallards. I also found White-Winged Scoters near Hyner on February 19<sup>th</sup> as well as a Golden Eagle. That same weekend Laurie Cressman and Linda Zook reported from the Allenwood area, 8 Common Mergansers, 13 Hooded Mergansers, a domestic Mallard and 5 females, a Belted Kingfisher, and a Wood Duck. Along the road we saw a Bluebird, 2 Northern Flickers, 1 Song Sparrow, 6 Robins, 5 Blue Jays, 5 Chickadees, 2 Downy Woodpeckers, 2 Red-bellied Woodpeckers, 2 Red-tailed Hawks, a Carolina Wren, a Titmouse, and a Red-breasted Nuthatch. We came upon a tree filled with Starlings and there were 20+ Red-winged Blackbirds. And finally, on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, I found a huge flock of 100+ Snow Buntings and 50+ Horned Larks in Cogan House Township along Caldwell Road.

On February 26th there were 2 Redhead and 10 Ring-Necked Ducks on the river not far from the Arch Street bridge.

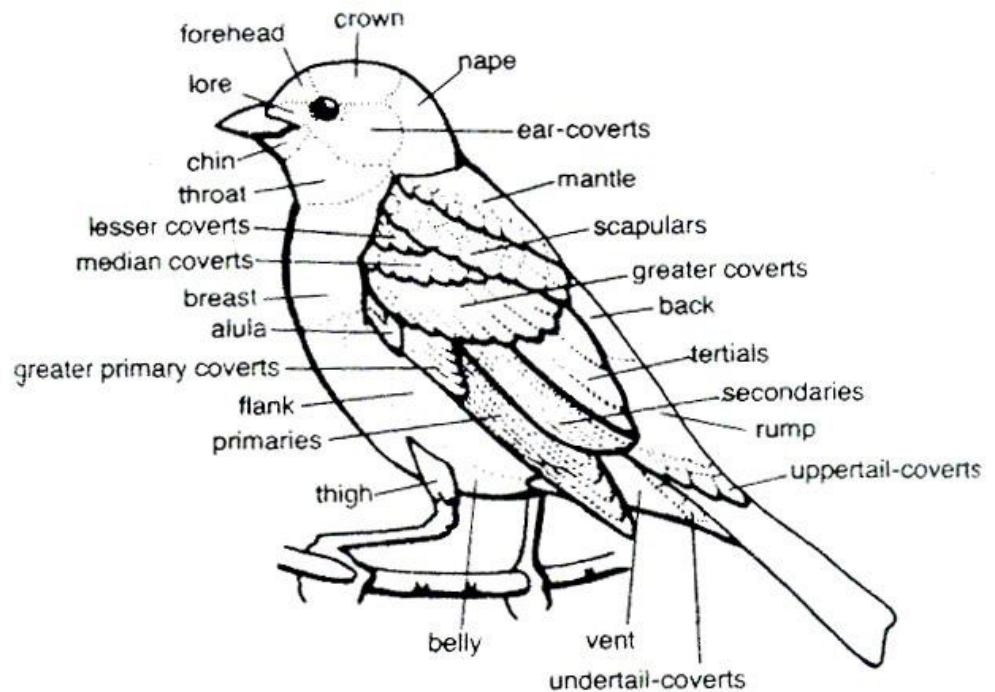
Enjoy the end of winter, and by the time you're reading this report Golden Eagles will be in full migration on White Deer Ridge and waterfowl should plentiful on the river.

*Dave Ferry*

# Kids' Korner: Names for Bird Parts

Knowing the names of the parts of a bird's body allows you to make accurate notes in order to identify an individual bird. The accuracy of these notes will be helped by the use of the terms shown above. Knowing the terminology helps you focus your attention on specific parts of a bird as you observe it. Sometimes such details as an incomplete eye ring or the color of the undertail coverts will lead you to the identification of a bird.

Birds may be mostly one or two colors. But, it is important to notice also the color of the bird's legs, feet and bill. These can be good identification clues. See if there is white coloring on the edges of the tail or if it has white "wingbars". These are also important identification clues.



**abdomen** - the belly.

**auriculars (ear coverts)** - the feathers that cover the bird's ear opening (located behind the eyes). Same as ear patch.

**breast** - the area over the belly and under the throat.

**claws** - hard talons at the end of each toe.

**crest**— some birds exhibit feathers on the head that are erect, or become erect. Usually on the forehead and/or crown.

**coverts**— feathers that cover other feathers

**crown** - the top of the bird's head.

**flank**—side of body

**forehead** - the area directly above the eyes.

**lores** - the area on each side of a bird's face, between the eyes and the upper bill.

**lower mandible** - the lower part of the bill.

**nape** - the back of the neck.

**primaries** - the main flight feathers on the wings (they are located on lower [outer] parts of the wings).

**scapulars** - feathers on the shoulder (also called lesser secondary coverts).

**secondaries** - the smaller flight feathers on the wings - they are on the upper part of the

wings (above the primaries).

**tail feathers** - flight feathers at the end of the bird (used for steering).

**tertiaries**— most innermost feathers on wing, protective covering the primaries and secondaries.

**throat** - the area under head and above the chest.

**tarsus**— leg.

**upper mandible** - the upper part of the bill.

**wing coverts** - small feathers that cover the base of larger wing feathers (located at the top of the wings under the scapulars).

Created by Joan Knight.