

## Dr. S. Marie Kuhnen, NJ North Coast Region 2014 Memorial Field Trip

The Dr. S. Marie Kuhnen Memorial Field Trip took place along the New Jersey North Coast February 9, 2014. Six Sussex County Bird Club stalwarts and I weathered the late afternoon snowstorm and logged 258 miles from and to Ross's. From 7:00 a.m. through 7:00 p.m. we experienced a temperature range from 5 to 32 degrees Fahrenheit. Winds from the northeast were brisk and chilling with a concluding snow. The tour began at Manasquan Inlet's south jetty Point Pleasant Beach where we searched for a Red-necked Grebe and observed an abundance of Common Loons as well as Long-tailed Ducks (Oldsquaws.) We concluded by searching for a Western Grebe at the Monmouth County Information Visitor's Center.

I first birded this region during a Field Ornithology course in 1967 at Montclair State University taught by Dr. Kuhnen. Subsequently, Marie and I birded the region together every February for the next 40 years. Many of those North Shore field trips led by Marie served as opportunities for Pocono Environmental Education Center (PEEC) staff members' professional development and personal enrichment.

Jack Padalino, president emeritus of PEEC as well as Brandwein Institute, a partner with the National Park Service, orchestrated the North Shore Tour that included visiting numerous fresh water ponds, estuaries, inlets, and oceanfront. Many of the ponds and much of the area was frozen this year.

The pre-dawn start was at Ross' Corner and en route "down the shore," a New Jersey idiom, we birded looking for Red-tailed Hawks. We saw two Pileated Woodpeckers along Route 206.

A North Shore tour, November through March is noted for loons, grebes, Northern Gannet, Great Cormorant, geese, ducks including dabblers, divers, and sea ducks, Purple Sandpiper, gulls, and if you're lucky, Alcids. It is also possible to see noteworthy species sighted in the past such as Red-necked Grebe, Eurasian Widgeon, Common and King Eiders, Harlequin Duck, Little, Common Black-headed, Bonaparte's, Iceland, Lesser Black-backed, and Glaucous gulls, as well as Black-legged Kittiwake. A list of rare species observed in the past include Eared and Western Grebes, Tufted Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye, Sooty Tern, Black-tailed Gull, Sabine's Gull, Dovekie, Common and Thick-billed Murres, Black Guillemot and Razorbill, an impressive list of "target species" for a tour.

How did we do? Compared with last year's 55 species, this year 65 bird species were observed. Highlights include two loons, Common and Red-throated, three Grebes; Red-necked, Horned, and Western both Great and Double-crested Cormorants, Northern Gannet, over 500 Mute Swans at Shark River, Brant, 21 ducks – Long-tailed, White-winged, Common Black and Surf Scoters, Common, Red-breasted, and Hooded Mergansers, Red-tailed Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, and Peregrine Falcon. Shorebirds: Purple Sandpiper, and Killdeer. Three species of gulls: Great Black-backed, Herring, and Ring-billed.

The trip finale at the Monmouth County VC yielded a Western Grebe from the seawall and a King Eider on the bayside.

We returned to Ross's Corner at 7:00 PM where two inches of snow had fallen with more to come. Look forward to next winter's North Shore field trip.

I will be leading Searches for Eagles field trips in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and Upper Delaware Sunday, February 16, 2014 and Saturday, March 8, 2014.

TO PARTICIPATE IN A SEARCH FOR EAGLES FIELD TRIP

PHONE: 570.296.6257 AND INDICATE WHICH TRIP(S) YOU WILL BE ATTENDING.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at PEEC or 10:00 a.m. at the Historic Callahan House, 101 Route 209 South @ mile marker 21, Milford, PA – **WEATHER PERMITTING**.

Dress warmly, bring binoculars, field guides, and a lunch.

### **THERE IS NO CHARGE**

Eagle observation data that we collect is shared with members of the Sussex County Bird Club, Eagle

Institute, and Hawk Migration Association of North America HMANA.

An Eagle identification field guide and a "Search for Eagles" hand-out will be provided for participants by the Paul F-Brandwein Institute.