

Search for Eagles, Dr. S. Marie Kuhnen  
Memorial Field Trip Series, 8 January 2017

The third Dr. S. Marie Kuhnen Memorial Field Trip, Search for Eagles took place in the Delaware Valley Sunday, January 8, 2017 from 8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The temperature at the start was 10 degrees, during the search rose to 22 degrees and at the conclusion dropped back to 19. It was a clear sunny day which began with watching feeder birds at home and at the Pocono Environmental Education Center (PEEC) that included 4 Pileated Woodpeckers, Dark-eyed Junco, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Tufted Titmouse, American Goldfinch, and Tree Sparrow among others. We logged 150 miles in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and Upper Delaware Scenic River from PEEC. The trip concluded at the headwaters of the Lackawaxen River.

Jack Padalino, president emeritus of PEEC and the Brandwein Institute, a partner with the National Park Service, led the search that included seeing 67 Bald Eagles (BE), 30 adults, 37 juveniles, 17 Red-tailed Hawks and 39 species of birds.

Our first Red-tailed Hawk (RT) was perched at Heller's Farm, a second at the Eshback Access, and a third at the intersection of Little Egypt Road and Route 209. RTs 4 & 5 were seen at the Bushkill Access with Black Ducks, Mallards, and Canada Geese. RTs 6 & 7 were spotted proximal to the group camp site as we traveled north on Route 209. RTs 8 & 9 were at the Eshback Access near the river. We added the 10th RT at the Hornbeck Trailhead along with a rapidly flying Sharp-shinned Hawk. No BE at the Dingmans Access; however, we watched a Cooper's Hawk make a pass at the birds at the Toll Both feeder. The BE nest near mile marker 17 on Route 209 is still there. This nest site has been active for at least the past five years and I frequently see BEs near it. At the historic Callahan House feeders, headquarters of the Brandwein Institute, we added White-throated and Song Sparrows.

There is an active nest on the road to Milford Beach. The nest is located in the tallest White Pine to the right of the first house on the right after passing Metz Road. The nest is about a quarter of the way down the tree trunk from the top of the Pine. Two adult BEs were perched at the nest. As we looked at them from Metz Road they both launched from their perch and headed to the Delaware River. We proceed to the canoe launch site and spotted two adult BE perched in a White Pine on the NJ side of the river, these were most likely the two BE we spotted at the nest. We proceeded upriver and spotted 2 adult BE perched in a Sycamore Tree near condominiums at the end of Bennet Street. We shared the look at the BEs through the scope with two hikers. A WOW experience for them. From this vantage we watched an additional 3 RTs.

On the way to the Riverview RV Park we spotted House Sparrows, House Finches, and Rock Pigeons but no eagles. There were 100 Canada Geese, 10 Hooded Mergansers, and a lone Common Goldeneye on the river. At 11:00 a.m. leaving the Riverview 2 adult BEs were spotted soaring above the PA Welcome Center. We were able to see both BEs perched on the hillside across from the Center. Ring-billed Gulls were loafing downriver from the bridge between Matamoras and Port Jervis. We added 10 Ring-billed Gulls at Port Jervis West End Beach. No eagles at Eddy Pond Resort.

At the Hawks Nest historical marker beside a vista we got a distant look at 2 soaring BEs.

At Pond Eddy in a White Pine on the PA side of the river is a BE nest. At noon we searched the area with diligence and found BEs everywhere; 13 BEs: 3 adults and 10 juveniles. Most were perched; however, as we watched there was considerable flight activity.

We were successful on the loop to the Mongaup Reservoir Observation Blind but no BE were at the blind. The entire area was frozen. We did spot a BE perched in a White Pine along Plank Road. As we were crossing the Rio Dam a juvenile BE circled over the car flew into the direct sunlight then disappeared.

We returned to the Delaware, spotted two perched adult BEs and a number of juveniles that

we probably had seen before. Passing the Pond Eddy nest we saw a Common Raven and added our 20th BE that was perched above the Pond Eddy road sign. High above the Pond Eddy bridge 5 BEs, all juveniles, were exhibiting courtship behavior by attempting to lock talons and tumble through the sky, It was a spectacular show.

By 1:00 p.m we were at the intersection of Berm-Church Road and Route 97 where upriver is a solid ice jamb. Before us and down river was open water and 17 BE's. The BEs were loafing on the ice, perched in the trees, soaring above and flying to and fro in front of us. We watched as the birds displaced one another at the water's edge along the ice. There were 10 adults and 7 juveniles. We stayed and enjoyed the birds for about 20 minutes before traveling north where above the ridges at the Upper Delaware National Park Service Headquarters an additional 5 BEs were soaring. Next it was on to Barryville for another two BEs, an adult circling above the Shohola bridge were we spotted a RT in flight and a juvenile BE in a tall pine tree. From the Minisink Ford observation blind we saw 3 Adult BEs soaring above the ridge upriver and two juveniles downriver.

A RT was in flight over the Roebling Bridge. Across the Roebling Bridge in Lackawaxen where the Eagle Institute is located visitors may find brochures, newsletters, and information about eagles. There is a gift shop and the Institute is open weekends.

From the Zane Grey Museum parking area we saw two adult BEs perched at the confluence of the Lackawaxen and Delaware Rivers on the PA side of the rivers. A half mile further north were a RT and 3 BEs in flight. We began to travel along the Lackawaxen. We had already observed 63 BEs and 17 RTs. There was probably some duplication of sightings between the Pond Eddy nest site and Berm-Church Road. At Engvalder Road upriver from the confluence we added an adult BE that flew above us. By 2:30 p.m. we added three additional BEs. The one near Appert Road was a juvenile. An adult BE was flying high above the river and a juvenile was in flight at swing bridge.

We concluded our search at 2:30 p.m..

Eagle observation data collected 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 is provided for participants by the Paul F-Brandwein Institute. Join us in the future to Search For Eagles.

Searches are scheduled for February 5, 2017, and March 5, 2017.

Call 570.296.6752 or eMail [jackpeec@aol.com](mailto:jackpeec@aol.com) to register for eagle searches.

Birds seen in addition to the 67 Bald Eagles:

Canada Goose	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	European Starling
American Black Duck	Downy Woodpecker	American Tree Sparrow
Mallard	Hairy Woodpecker	Song Sparrow
Common Goldeneye	Northern Flicker	Swamp Sparrow
Hooded Merganser	Pileated Woodpecker	White-throated Sparrow
Common Merganser	Blue Jay	Dark-eyed Junco
Bald Eagle	American Crow	Northern Cardinal
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Common Raven	House Finch
Cooper's Hawk	Black-capped Chickadee	Purple Finch
Red-tailed Hawk	Tufted Titmouse	American Goldfinch
Ring-billed Gull	Red-breasted Nuthatch	House Sparrow
Rock Pigeon	White-breasted Nuthatch	
Mourning Dove	Brown Creeper	
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Carolina Wren	