

Search for Eagles, Dr. S. Marie Kuhnen

Memorial Field Trip Series, 4 December 2016

The first 2016-2017 Dr. S. Marie Kuhnen Memorial Field Trip, Search for Eagles took place in the Delaware Valley Sunday, December 4, 2016 from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The temperature at the start was 35 degrees and at the finish 38 degrees. It was a clear gorgeous day. The day began with watching feeder birds at the Pocono Environmental Education Center (PEEC) that included Dark-eyed Junco, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Eastern Bluebird, American Goldfinch, and Tree Sparrow among others. We logged 147 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 27 species of birds with 10 Bald Eagles (BE), all adults, no juveniles were seen.

The first raptors of the day were two Red-tailed(RT) Hawks perched west of Route 209 at the Heller Farm. At the Eshbach Access in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area was another RT along with Song Sparrows. Two Wild Turkeys were in the fields near Tom's Creek. There were no eagles at the Bushkill access; however, 5 Mourning Doves were there. Heading north from the access on Route 209 I saw an additional RT at Eshbachs. As I drove I spotted a skein of 100 or more Canada Geese flying up river.

No eagles at the Dingmans Ferry Access; however; a Downy Woodpecker was at the feeders near Dingmans Bridge toll booth. Last year I was able to find a BE at the Dingmans Ferry Cemetery. I gave it a look, no BE but did see a Hairy Woodpecker.

Another RT flew above the road about a half mile north of the intersection of 739 & 209. The BE nest near mile marker 17 on Route 209 is no longer there. This former nest site had been active for at least the past five years. I have recently been seeing BEs perched in the White Pine trees on the riverside in this area.

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 from the top of the Pine. At Milford Beach canoe launch site I saw my first BE of the day. It was soaring just south of the bridge and criss crossing the river. While watching this BE I was able to spot another BE in flight much further down river. Also from the launch I watched two RTs making courtship maneuvers. Both birds remained in

the air together for a few minutes then soared overhead and did their courtship display, locking talons and tumbling through the air.

At the feeders of the historic Callahan House, headquarters of the Brandwein Institute. We added White-throated Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, and Carolina Wren.

No BE at the Milford nest on Mott Street that had recently been reconstructed. After the nest crashed to the ground the BEs began immediately constructing a new nest on the north side further up the creek. While enjoying birds at the Mott Street feeders a Coopers Hawk flew over.

RT #8 flying above Route 209 was added at Cummings road north of Milford. On the way to the Riverview RV Park we spotted House Sparrows, House Finches, and Rock Pigeons but no eagles. At 11:00 AM leaving the Riverview RT #9 was spotted near Home Depot. The RT was a "wire bird" perched on the utility wire. A rest stop at the Pennsylvania Welcome Center an Eagle Institute exhibit and a diorama of the Roebling Bridge was enjoyed.

A group of Ring-billed Gulls were loafing downriver from the bridge between Matamoras and Port Jervis and a lone Ring-billed Gull was at West End Park. No eagles were seen from the Eddy Pond Resort overlook.

At the Hawks Nest historical marker was a great vista but no birds

At the Pond Eddy nest sight in a White Pine on the PA side of the river an adult BE in the nest was rearranging sticks on the nest. I watched her for about 20 minutes while she was joined by her mate who landed above the nest then flew over the Delaware heading upriver.

Drew a blank on the loop to the bridge approaching the Mongaup Reservoir Observation Blind, searched upstream for BEs to no avail, there were no eagles.

There were no eagles to be seen along Plank Road or from the Rio Reservoir Dam. This was the second time that during an eagle search season that no BEs were seen on the Mongaup - Rio loop. We returned to the Delaware and traveled upriver. As we passed Pond Eddy again the two BEs were still at the nest. No eagles were at Minisink Ford observation blind.

An adult BE was perched at the confluence of the Lackawaxen and Delaware Rivers and was spotted from the NY side of the river from Route 97. From a half mile further north on 97 on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware two more adult BEs perched on the same branch were seen.

Across the Roebling Bridge is where the Eagle Institute is located and a video of area eagles is screened, where brochures, newsletters, and information about eagles are made available to visitors. There is a gift shop and the Institute is open weekends; however, the Institute was closed in December..

At the confluence of the Lackawaxen and Delaware Rivers in the northeast corner the Zane Grey Museum parking lot a BE was perched high in a White Pine. After a few minutes it launched into the air and flew to a down river perch.. Another adult BE was spotted in the distance upriver on the New York side.

At the confluence of the Lackawaxen and Delaware rivers on the north side of the river is an active BE nest. We were able to locate the nest but no BE was in it. One BE was seen upstream from the Zane Gray Bridge along the Lackawaxen. The field field trip concluded at 3:30 PM.

Eagle observation data 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 is provided for participants by the Paul F-Brandwein Institute. Join us in the future to Search For Eagles. Four searches are scheduled for the first Sunday in: January 2017 & January 8, February 5, 2017, and March 5, 2017. Call [570.296.6752](tel:570.296.6752) or eMail jackpeec@aol.com to register for eagle searches.

Birds seen in addition to the 10 Bald Eagles:

Canada Goose – 100 +	Tufted Titmouse
Ring-billed Gull	Black-capped Chickadee
Wild Turkey	White-breasted Nuthatch
Cooper’s Hawk	Eastern Bluebird
Red-tailed Hawk – 9	European Starling
Rock Pigeon	Northern Cardinal
Morning Dove	House Finch
Hairy Woodpecker	American Goldfinch
Downy Woodpecker	Dark-eyed Junco
Carolina Wren	White-throated Sparrow
Blue Jay	Song Sparrow
American Crow	Tree Sparrow
Common Raven	House Sparrow