

Search for Eagles, Dr. S. Marie Kuhnen - Memorial Field Trip Series, Sunday, 8 March 2015

The fourth and final 2014-15 Dr. S. Marie Kuhnen Memorial Field Trip, Search for Eagles took place in the Delaware Valley Sunday, 8 March 2015 from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 PM The temperature at the start was 34 degrees and at the finish 42 degrees. It was a cold overcast to sunny day with some snow flurries and rain at the start that began with watching feeder birds at the Pocono Environmental Education Center (PEEC) that included Dark-eyed Junco, Black-capped Chickadee, and Tufted Titmouse among others. We logged 148 miles in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and Upper Delaware Scenic River from PEEC to the Bushkill Access and the trip's conclusion 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 with six participants that recorded 44 species of birds including 24 Bald Eagles (BE), 2 Golden Eagles (GE) and 10 Red-tailed Hawks. The Delaware River, which was subject to freezing temperatures during the last month, was mostly frozen over with few stretches of open water. Fifteen of the twenty-four Bald Eagles we observed were adults and near open water of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and Scenic Delaware. One of the Golden Eagles was an adult. Eagles we saw were standing on the ice, perched, and in flight.

The first raptors of the day were two adult BEs west of Route 209 at the north end of the shale pit near Tom's Creek. Our next BE was an immature bird perched high on the ridge above the Bushkill Access. It was in a dead White Pine tree. We saw a mature Golden Eagle near the immature BE. As we were watching the GE the immature BE launched into the air, flew over us, crossed to the New Jersey side of the river and perched for a few minutes. We returned to enjoy looking at the GE. Birds we saw at the Bushkill Access were: Red-breasted Merganser, Black Duck, Common Goldeneye, American Coot, Eastern Bluebird, and American Robin.

As we traveled north on Route 209 a Great Blue Heron and an immature BE flew over us in the vicinity of Hornbeck's Creek.

During the past few weeks I had been seeing perched adult BEs upriver from the Dingmans Bridge on the Jersey side near open water. At the Dingmans Ferry Access we drew a blank, no BE; however, visiting the feeders at the toll house were: Red-breasted Nuthatch, Red-bellied Woodpecker, White-throated Sparrows, Northern Cardinal, and Dark-eyed Junco. Returning to Route 209 north we saw another Red-tailed Hawk perched above on the cliff along the highway. In flight at Zimmerman Flats was an immature BE. The BE nest near mile marker 17 on Route 209 has had birds around it for the past few weeks but there were none at the nest today. This nest site has been active for the past few years.

At 9:45 AM we were at Milford Beach where from the south end we saw an immature BE way down river standing on the ice. While we watched, a Coyote appeared between us and the BE.

At the Callahan House, satellite office of the Brandwein Institute, we watched feeder birds, Dark-eyed Juncos, White-breasted Nuthatch, and White Throated Sparrow.

As we turned to visit the Mott Street nest we saw in the top of a White Pine in town behind the Dunkin Donut a pair of adult BE. We continued on Mott Street to the current nest. The former nest crashed to the ground two years ago and the BEs immediately constructed a new nest on the north side of the Sawkill Creek next to a house.

On Ann Street at the park that overlooks the Delaware we watched three adult Red-tailed Hawks soaring above the horizon.

We continued to the rear of the Best Western, no eagles; however, a lone Mute Swan, group of Common Mergansers, and a Long-tailed Duck were on the water..

At the River View Restaurant near where PA, NJ, and NY converge no luck or BE.

We made a brief visit to the PA Welcome Center and viewed the Roebling bridge diorama.

Eddy Farm Resort overlook presented Black Ducks, Mallards, Canada Geese and Common Mergansers.

By Noon we were at the Hawks Nest historical marker with a great vista, snow flurries, and two Common Ravens soaring above the ridge. A Pileated Woodpecker flew above us..

At the Pond Eddy nest sight, a White Pine on the PA side of the river we found the nest and a perched immature BE nearby. We also scanned the face of the cliff above us and found two adult BE in the White Pine where we've seen them in the past. These eagles were displaced by a pair of Common Ravens. As we were leaving another immature BE flew above us. We continued to the Mongaup Falls Observation Blind.

As we crossed the bridge approaching the Observation Blind we searched upstream for BEs, there were none. No BE from the blind as well; however, the Eagle Institute Volunteer monitoring the site told us that two immature BE were perched recently upstream from the bridge and in the White Pines. Plank Road also lacked BEs. No BEs were at the Rio Reservoir Dam. We returned to the Delaware and traveled upriver.

As we approached the Pond Eddy nest sight again, our second Golden Eagle for the day flew above us heading down river. It was a juvenile bird showing classic field marks, an all dark body, white banded tail, and white patches on the underside of the wings.

In Barryville along the road that parallels the river no BE. We saw three adult BEs along this stretch of the river on our January field trip.

No BE Minisink Ford Observation Blind.

We traveled north to the Roebling bridge in NY and crossed to the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware where proximal to the Roebling Bridge is The Eagle Institute which provides a video of area eagles, brochures, newsletters, and other information about eagles is made available to visitors. There is a gift shop and the Institute is open weekends December through March.

A number of people were at the confluence of the Lackawaxen and Delaware rivers in the parking area looking at a mature BE perched across the Lackawaxen. Within ten minutes from the Zane Gray Museum parking area we saw an additional 5 BE soaring above the Delaware south of us and a pair of adults overhead.

Above us on the north side of the Lackawaxen river near the confluence with the Delaware is an active relocated BE nest just over the ridge.

By the time we reached the Lackawaxen we had seen 22 Bald Eagles and 2 Golden Eagles.

We traveled upstream along the Lackawaxen to the PPL Dam site and saw two additional BEs. An immature BE and a mature BE perched in the same tree near Appert Road.

We concluded our field trip at 3:30 PM.

Next Search for Eagles: December 2015, January 2016, February 2016, and March 2016.

TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SEARCH FOR EAGLES FIELD TRIP

PHONE: 570.296.6752 AND INDICATE YOU WILL BE ATTENDING.

Or, eMail: jack@brandwein.org to leave a message.

Meet 8:00 a.m. at the PEEC parking lot OR Meet 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

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

In addition to the 24 Bald Eagles, 2 Golden Eagles, and 10 Red-tailed Hawks we saw:

Canada Goose
Mute Swan
American Black Duck
Mallard
Long-tailed Duck
Common Goldeneye
Common Merganser
Red-breasted Merganser
Wild Turkey
Great Blue Heron
Bald Eagle
Red-tailed Hawk
American Coot
Golden Eagle
Rock Pigeon
Mourning Dove
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker
American Kestrel
Blue Jay
American Crow
Common Raven
Black-capped Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
Red-breasted Nuthatch
White-breasted Nuthatch
Eastern Bluebird
American Robin
European Starling
American Tree Sparrow
Fox Sparrow
Song Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Northern Cardinal
Purple Finch
Pine Siskin
American Goldfinch
House Sparrow