

Search for Eagles, Dr. S. Marie Kuhnen
Memorial Field Trip Series, 5 March 2017

The Dr. S. Marie Kuhnen final Memorial Field Trip for the season, Search for Eagles took place in the Delaware Valley Sunday, March 5, 2017 from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The temperature at the start was 12 degrees, during the search rose to 34 degrees and at the conclusion dropped back to 22. It was a clear sunny day with minimal wind. We began with watching feeder birds at home and at the Pocono Environmental Education Center (PEEC) that included Pileated, Hairy, Downy, and Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Dark-eyed Junco, Black-capped Chickadee, White and Red-breasted Nuthatch, Tufted Titmouse, and American Goldfinch among others. The four of us logged 142 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 29 Bald Eagles (BE), 10 Red-tailed Hawks (RT) and 35 species of birds.

Our first BE, a perched adult was at the Bushkill Access high on the ridge north of the Access.

Nearby were an additional two juvenile BEs. At the north end of the shale bank near Tom's Creek an adult BE was perched in the tree that once held a huge nest. Our first two Red-tailed Hawks (RT) soared above us as we looked at the perched BE. At Eshback's we added 12 Canada Geese. In the vicinity of Briscoe Mountain Road to PEEC a Common Raven flew overhead. We added a RTs at Hornbeck's Trailhead.

One juvenile BE flew above us at the intersection of Route 209 and Mill Street, the road to Dingmans Falls where 24 American Robins were feeding on Staghorn Sumac fruits. We drew a blank, no BE at the Dingmans Access. We drove through the Dingman's Cemetery in search of a reported BE nest but did not find it. We have seen BEs perched in this area. By 9:30 AM we were at Zimmerman Flats where we watched two adult BEs performing courtship maneuvers. Near mile marker 17 on Route 209 on the north side of the shale bank is an active nest. This nest has been active for at least the past five years and I frequently see BEs on and near it. None were there today; however, just a few hundred yards north over the Raymondskill an adult BE soared high above.

At the historic Callahan House, headquarters of the Brandwein Institute, feeders we added Northern Cardinal and a few other perching birds.

There is an active nest on Metz road on the way 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 White Pine. BE #9 was added at Milford Beach perched in a tree on the Jersey side of the river. We proceeded upriver and spotted a RT perched close to us in a Sycamore Tree near River Road.

At Kittatinny Camp Ground above, high on the ridge a RT was perched. As we scoped the RT a juvenile BE flew over the ridge. As we approached the Best Western an adult BE soared in the distance. Behind the Best Western we watched a murder of crows mob a RT and added our 12th BE, an adult in flight. Bluebirds greeted us from atop Mullen stalks and nest boxes as we were departing the area and also heard a Killdeer.

On the way to the Riverview RV Park we spotted a Song Sparrow, Rock Pigeons, 2 Common Ravens, and a RT. At the Riverview were Ring-billed Gulls, Mallards, and Common Mergansers.

We stopped at the Pennsylvania Welcome Center and added Black and Turkey Vultures.

Ring-billed Gull and many Canada Geese were at Port Jervis West End Beach. No eagles at Eddy Pond Resort.

We altered our usual route and headed north on NY 42 to Plank Road where we watched 2 adult BEs fishing. Further along Plank Road we saw 4 juvenile BEs two standing on the ice and two perched. Continuing along the road we spotted 2 adult BEs on the ground at stream side. While we were watching them a juvenile BE flew overhead. We moved a bit further and spotted 2 more perched juvenile BEs as well as an adult. A Belted Kingfisher flew back and forth in front of us.

At the Mongaup Reservoir Observation Blind we saw Hooded Mergansers, Common Mergansers, and Black Ducks, but no BE. Nor were BEs at the Rio dam.

We returned to the Delaware and spotted two perched adult BEs. High above on the ridge on the NY side was an adult BE resting on its favorite perch in a White Pine. Another adult was perched a few yards to its right. At Pond Eddy in a White Pine on the PA side of the river is an active BE nest. We watched one of the eagles from the ridge top fly toward the nest and circle the area for a few minutes. An adult BE was perched in PA near where the house high on ridge is on the NY side.

Next it was on to Barryville no birds were present.

We traveled north beyond the Roebling bridge for a half mile and added 1 adult BE in flight.

From the Zane Grey Museum parking area we saw a RT perched at the confluence of the Lackawaxen and Delaware Rivers on the PA side. We had already observed 27 BEs and 9 RTs. We proceeded on Route 590 along the Lackawaxen and added two additional BEs that were in flight high above.

We concluded our search at 4:30 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. Our future Dr. S. Marie Kuhnen memorial searches are scheduled for the first Sundays of December 2017, January 2018, February 2018, and March 2018.

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

Birds seen:

Canada Goose
American Black Duck
MallardHooded Merganser
Common Merganser
Black Vulture
Turkey Vulture
Bald Eagle
Cooper's Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Ring-billed Gull
Rock Pigeon
Mourning Dove
Belted Kingfisher
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker
Blue Jay
American Crow
Common Raven
Black-capped Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
Red-breasted Nuthatch
White-breasted Nuthatch
Eastern Bluebird
American Robin
Song Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Northern Cardinal
Red-winged Blackbird
Common Grackle
House Finch
American Goldfinch
House Sparrow