

Search for Eagles, Brandwein Institute Field Trip: 9 December 2018

The first Brandwein Institute Field Trip, Search for Eagles took place in the Delaware Valley Sunday, December 9, 2018 from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The temperature at the start was 19 degrees and at the finish 32 degrees. It was a cold clear day that began with watching feeder birds that included Dark-eyed Junco, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Pileated, Hairy, Downy, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, and White-breasted Nuthatch among others. We logged 156 miles in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and Upper Delaware Scenic River from the Bushkill Access and the trip's conclusion at the headwaters of the Lackawaxen River.

Jack Padalino, president emeritus of the Brandwein Institute, a partner with the National Park Service, led the search that included seeing 26 species of birds including 20 Bald Eagles (BE) and 14 Red-tailed Hawks.

The first raptor of the day was a Red-tailed Hawk perched west of Route 209 near the turn from Route 209 to PEEC at Briscoe Mountain Road. The Tom's Creek shale embankment presented us with our first perched adult BE. Bushkill Access presented Common Mergansers.

We toured through the Dingmans Cemetery where BEs had recently been reported. No BE.

No eagles at the closed Dingmans Ferry Access to the Delaware River; however, a flock of Dark-eyed Juncos, Tufted Titmice, and Mourning Doves greeted us.

The BE nest near mile marker 17 on Route 209 has had birds in and around it for the past few weeks and there was an adult BE perched on the rim of the nest today. This nest has been active for at least the past seven years.

We checked the Metz Road nest. It was empty. No eagles present at Milford Beach.

At the Callahan House, headquarters of the Brandwein Institute we watched feeder birds and added Northern Cardinal.

No BE at the reconstructed Milford Mott Street nest. The former nest crashed to the ground and the BEs immediately began constructing a new nest on the north side of the Sawkill. The nest is no longer in use. Five Black Vultures roosted on the roof at the Prime Meats building.

North of Cummings Road a Red-tailed Hawk was perched on the ridge then took flight. This location is near where in past there was an active nest opposite the Kittatinny Camp Ground above the westbound lane along Interstate 80. The nest is no longer there.

We did a first try at the Delaware Valley High School and startled 2 adult BEs perched overhanging the Delaware River. They took flight and headed downriver.

We continued to the Best Western, at Farm Plus were over 2,000 European Starlings, 100 Rock Pigeons but no eagles. At the River View Restaurant near where PA, NJ, and NY converge, Bluebirds, Cedar Waxwings, and 100 plus Canada Geese but no BE. We chatted with the office manager who told us that there are three BE nests nearby, two in the Port Jervis cemetery and one across the river beyond the island.

We crossed the Delaware and found 75 Ring-billed Gulls and Herring Gull at west end beach.

By 12:30 we were at the Hawks Nest historical marker great vista however no birds.

At the Pond Eddy nest sight, on the PA side of the river we were disheartened, the BE nest is no longer there. We have been monitoring activity at this nest site for the past six years.

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, From the observation blind we watched a perched juvenile BE. This bird subsequently left the perch and pursued Common Mergansers below. The BE then rested on the ice. Two adult BEs were eating fish while standing on the ice at the water's edge in the distance. There were four eagles along Plank Road, an immature in flight overhead, a perched adult, two adults on the ice, and a low-lying bird close to the BEs on the ice. No BEs were at the Rio Reservoir Dam.

We returned to the Delaware and traveled upriver. One adult BE perched high above us on the New York side of the river at Pond Eddy. We checked the BE nest opposite the yellow house on the Shahola side of the river. No birds at Minisink Ford Observation Blind. North of the Roebling Bridge from the NY side we saw a perched adult BE in PA and another soaring above the river.

On the Pennsylvania side proximal to the Roebling Bridge is The Eagle Institute where a video of area eagles is screened and where brochures, newsletters, and information about eagles is made available to visitors. There is a gift shop and the Institute is open weekends.

At the confluence of the Lackawaxen and Delaware rivers two adult BEs were flying above the Zane Gray parking area. On the north side along the Delaware River 2 BEs were perched.

By the time we had reached the Lackawaxen we had seen 17 Bald Eagles. Traveling upstream along the Lackawaxen at 3:15 PM we saw three additional adult BEs near Appert Road.

Two were very vocal chattering at each other and a third bird, a juvenile flew by traveling upriver.

We concluded our field trip at 3:30 p.m.

Next Search for Eagles field trip: Sunday, December 16, 2018

TO PARTICIPATE IN A SEARCH FOR EAGLES FIELD TRIP PHONE: 845.325.0536 or 570.296.6752 INDICATE WHICH SEARCH YOU WILL BE ATTENDING AND WHERE YOU WILL JOIN US

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

Meet 8:00 a.m. in PEEC parking lot OR

Meet 10:00 a.m. at 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.

Birds seen on the December 9, 2018 Search for Eagles

Canada Goose
American Black Duck
Mallard
Common Merganser
Black Vulture
Bald Eagle
Red-tailed Hawk
Ring-billed Gull
Herring Gull
Rock Pigeon
Mourning Dove
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Pileated Woodpecker
Blue Jay
American Crow
Tufted Titmouse
Black-capped Chickadee
White-breasted Nuthatch
American Robin
Eastern Bluebird
European Starling
Cedar Waxwing
Dark-eyed Junco
American Goldfinch