

Search for Eagles, Dr. S. Marie Kuhnen - Memorial Field Trip - Sunday, February 3, 2019

Over the 50 years I've been leading these searches for eagles this search is the one with the most Eagles observed. The number of eagles observed, 85, may probably be attributed to the arctic vortex which kept so much of the open waters north of us. Eagles may have moved further south in search of food, mainly fish in the open water of the Delaware and Lackawaxen Rivers.

For the third 2018-2019 Dr. S. Marie Kuhnen Memorial Field Trip, Search for Eagles took place in the Delaware Valley Sunday, February 3, 2019 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The temperature at the start was 21 degrees and at the finish 46 degrees. It was a clear sunny to cloudy day that began with a flocking of feeder birds including Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, Dark-eyed Junco, Blue Jays, Pileated Woodpeckers, among others. Seven participants 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.

Dr. Padalino, president emeritus of PEEC and the Brandwein Institute, a partner with the National Park Service, led the search that yielded 33 species of birds including 85 Bald Eagles (BE), 13 Red-tailed Hawks, Red-shouldered Hawk, and a Common Raven. The first raptor of the day was a Red-tailed Hawk. The Bushkill Access was closed and we added Black-capped Chickadee. Returning to route 209 and traveling north we spotted a second RT perched RT near mile marker 7. A third RT was perched east of 209 about a half mile north of Briscoe Mountain Road where we added Song Sparrow. We added 3 Wild Turkeys at the Dingmans Campground.

At the Dingmans Ferry Access: however we added Red-breasted Nuthatch at the toll booth area. I saw five BEs earlier this week flying above the ridge in the vicinity of the Dingmans Campground. They were not there this morning. I have been seeing BEs this week at the mile marker 17 area. We watched one perched on the edge of the nest, and a few moments later another BE flew into the nest and disappeared.

At 10:00 AM at the Callahan House we were joined by additional participants.

At the Metz Road nest nor were they at Milford Beach or along the River Road.

We located a BE nest near the NPS Pierce House; however, no BEs were seen. However, we listened to chatter in the distance. We looked at the nest through a spotting scope.

We found a perched Red-tailed Hawk behind Staples and were able to observe the bird through the spotting scope. This was our tenth RT of the day. We continued to the Best Western, no luck other than 50 Rock Pigeons.

Our next stop at the PA welcome center brought a Cooper's Hawk and another RT.

Our new search location is the Port Jervis Cemetery at Laurel Ridge, great view of the rivers at tri-states park where after three tries I finally discovered the BE nest. No BEs were present.

continued to the Mongaup Falls Observation Blind by way of Old Plank Road. A juvenile BE was perched at the open water, then flew upriver. Slowly Crossing the bridge and passing the Observation Blind we found no BEs upriver. Across from the blind an Adult BE was perched and was viewed through a spotting scope. A juvenile BE was further downstream and while we were at the blind an Adult BE soared above. From Plank Road we saw 2 BEs at the nest high on the ridge.

Passing the dam at the Rio Reservoir we searched downstream without success. We moved on to the Shawangunk and traveled upriver. An adult BE was spotted high in a White Pine east of the road. No BEs at Shohola nest or in the vicinity of the Minisink Observation Blind. A Common Raven was seen flying downriver at the Highland River Access. We traveled north of the Roebling Bridge on the NY side of the river and enjoyed the spectacular ice formations, including a frozen over waterfall. A juvenile BE was standing on the ice at the confluence of the Lackawaxen and the Delaware Rivers.

On the Pennsylvania side near the Roebling Bridge is the National Park Service Visitor Center where brochures, newsletters, and information about eagles is made available to visitors.

10 BEs seen from the Zane Gray parking area were perched in NY. We enjoyed the BEs through the spotting scope. By the time we reached the Lackawaxen eleven BEs had been seen.

Within the next two hours we were to see a record 74 additional BEs.

The first 2 BEs were perched near Hotel Road then took flight. Next were two perched juvenile BEs and an Adult BE flying down river. Our 17th BE was a perched juvenile with a distinct black mask. The next three BEs were at Evangelder Road with an additional two, a perched adult and juvenile flying upriver. Next we saw an adult BE in flight who then perched high on the ridge. It was on this ridge a few years ago that I spotted eleven BEs perched in the same tree. This is probably where the birds like to roost. BEs 24 through 33 were actively flying, perched low above the water, and in one instance an adult BE made a pass at Black Ducks on the water who scattered.

The next three BEs were perched near Swing Bridge. We spotted an additional 15 BEs upriver from Swing Bridge. The next 15 BEs found us at Appert Road. They were an assortment of adults and juveniles, most were juveniles. Upriver from Appert Road we witnessed a remarkable event. Within ten yards of each other on the river bank 11 BEs were standing on the ground at the water's edge. Some entered the water and pulled fish from it, others displaced the birds on the captured fish. We watched this flurry of activity for 10 minutes before moving on. Further along the river we saw a similar event, BEs on the shoreline at the water's edge feeding and displacing each other. We watched as an adult BE flew from its perch and extended its talons as it plunged to the water. It didn't catch a fish. The next BE was an adult flying upriver.

Twenty-four BEs along the Lackawaxen,
The field trip concluded at 4:00 p.m.

Future Searches for Eagles:

Field-day: February 10th, March 10th

Start at 12:00 p.m. NOON at the Historic Callahan House,

PARTICIPATE IN A SEARCH FOR EAGLES FIELD TRIP

PHONE: 570.296.6752 AND INDICATE YOU WILL BE ATTENDING.

eMail: jack@brandwein.org and leave a message.

1 Day: March 3rd

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the PEEC parking lot OR Meet 10:00 a.m. at the Callahan House,

Route 209 South @ mile marker 21, Milford, PA –

WEATHER PERMITTING. - Dress warmly, bring binoculars, field guides, and a lunch.

THERE IS NO CHARGE

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

As seen on the February 3, 2019 Search for Eagles

Canada Goose

Black Duck

Canada Goose

Blue Jay

Wooded Merganser

Common Merganser

Wild Turkey

Black Vulture

Golden Eagle

Sharp-shinned Hawk

Red-shouldered Hawk

Screech Owl

Rock Pigeon

Rock Dove

Red-bellied Woodpecker

Downy Woodpecker

Downy Woodpecker

Red-bellied Woodpecker

Red-bellied Sapsucker

Blue Jay

American Crow

Common Raven

Red-eyed Vireo

Black-capped Chickadee

White-breasted Nuthatch

White-breasted Nuthatch

Chipping Sparrow

Chipping Sparrow

Chipping Sparrow

White-throated Sparrow

Black-eyed Junco

American Goldfinch

Chipping Sparrow

