

Search for Eagles, Dr. S. Marie Kuhnen - Memorial Field Trip Series, Sunday, 3 January 2016

The second 2015-16 Dr. S. Marie Kuhnen Memorial Field Trip, Search for Eagles took place in the Delaware Valley Sunday, 3 January 2016 from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 PM The temperature at the start was 27 degrees and at the finish 42 degrees. It was a bright sunny morning to an overcast day. We began watching feeder birds at the Pocono Environmental Education Center (PEEC) including Dark-eyed Junco, Black-capped Chickadee, and Tufted Titmouse among others. We logged 154 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 eight participants that recorded 30 species of birds including 21 Bald Eagles (BE), 2 Cooper's Hawks and 11 Red-tailed Hawks. The Delaware River, which is subject to freezing temperatures during much of winter, was totally open water. Twelve of the 21 Bald Eagles we observed were adults and near open water. Eagles we saw were both perched, and in flight.

Leaving PEEC we traveled south on Route 209 where we saw our first Red-tailed Hawk another was spotted as we passed Tom's Creek where we saw a Red-bellied Woodpecker, 50 Dark-eyed Juncos, and a pair of American Crows then continued to search for birds along the way to the Bushkill Access. At the Access were 5 Eastern Bluebird, and a group of a 50 plus Cedar Waxwings.

As we traveled north on Route 209 the escarpment of the Pocono Plateau was clearly visible. A dozen American Robins fed on the weed seeds in the fields. In route to the Dingmans Ferry Bridge and access we saw some Mourning Doves and at Esbach's access was a White-throated Sparrow and White-breasted Nuthatch. 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 saw our first adult BE downriver perched in a White Pine on the Jersey side of the river. There were also two Canada Geese on the river.

Returning to Route 209 north as we approached Adam's Creek a Common Raven flew above us. The BE nest that was near mile marker 17 on Route 209 is no longer there. It probably fell due to its instability and activity of last year's juvenile BEs. The former nest site has had birds around it for the past few weeks and there were one adult BE perched nearby today. This nest site had been active for the past few years and will probably be active again.

Another adult Red-tailed Hawk was sighted south of the National Recreation Area entrance kiosk. We continued to Milford Beach. Along the way we spotted a huge nest in a White Pine tree, probably a BE nest but no BE was present. We will continue observing it on subsequent searches for eagles. There was not much activity at Milford Beach.

At the Callahan House, satellite office of the Brandwein Institute, we filled the feeders and watched birds, quite a few Black-capped Chickadees, one of whom landed on the feeder as I was filling it, Dark-eyed Juncos, White-breasted Nuthatch, and a Red-breasted Nuthatch.

Next was the Mott Street nest that was in the top of a White Pine proximal to the Sawkill Creek. We continued on Mott Street to the former nest site this nest was also gone. The first nest crashed to the ground two years ago and the BEs immediately constructed a new nest on the north side of the creek next to a house. Now this nest is gone. We lingered and watched a Hairy Woodpecker at feeders. As we were leaving Mott Street an adult BE was flying high above Milford and heading toward the Delaware River. In addition two Turkey Vultures were in the air above Milford

On Ann Street at the park that overlooks the Delaware we watched Gray Squirrels but to birds. On this trip it seemed that Gray Squirrels were abundant and everywhere.

We crossed the Delaware on the Milford bridge and spotted an adult BE flying to the Jersey side. This was probably the same BE we saw as we left Mott Street. Flying toward the bridge from the Jersey side were 4 Black Vultures. By 10:30 AM we were at the Lukoil Gas Station, Route 206 South where high above us was an adult BE and Red-tailed Hawk. Traveling north on the Clove Road in Montague we saw a juvenile BE proximal to Mashipacong Road that came toward us and flew less than 10 yards above the car. We continued to Port Jervis and entered Interstate 84 West where we were greeted by another adult BE. We continued to the rear of the Best Western, no eagles. Flying above the road at the Home Depot was a Red-tailed Hawk

At the River View Restaurant near where PA, NJ, and NY converge no BE; however, a large Cooper's Hawk flew down river in front of us. We made a brief visit to the PA Welcome Center and viewed the Roebling bridge diorama. As we crossed the bridge to Port Jervis a flock of Rock Pigeons took to the air.

Eddy Farm Resort overlook presented another Red-tailed Hawk in flight with a rodent in its talons.

At the Hawks Nest historical marker with a great vista where on last rip we saw Peregrine Falcon above the

Hawks Nest. As we searched above the pullout at the historical mark right above our heads flew two Common Ravens.

At the Pond Eddy nest, in a White Pine on the PA side of the river we located the BE nest and on our return loop saw a perched adult BE above the nest. As we were leaving two BE were soaring high above. We continued to the Mongaup Falls Observation Blind.

As we crossed the bridge approaching the Observation Blind we searched upstream for BEs, there were two perched adult BE high in a White Pine. From the parking lot we watched at least six more BE, all juveniles. They were perched, at one time three of them in the same tree. Two were actively trying to catch fish. We watched as they approached the surface of the water then thrust their talons into it in pursuit of fish. We watched this a number of times but did not see a BE catch a fish. While we watched six Common Mergansers flew over and Ring-billed Gulls were in the air. We counted 34 Common Mergansers on the water. Plank Road also had one juvenile BE. We crossed the Rio Reservoir Dam, looked downstream but no BE. We returned to the Delaware and traveled upriver.

In Barryville we spotted two adult Red-tailed Hawks soaring above town.

No BE at Minisink Ford Observation Blind.

We traveled north to the Roebling bridge and beyond in NY and saw an additional adult BE perched at the confluence of the Lackawaxen and Delaware Rivers. Continuing up river on the New York side we saw an adult BE flying downriver. We 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 for eagles; however, none were present. The perched BE we saw was gone.

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. We've seen BEs here many times on past searches.

By the time we reached the Lackawaxen we had seen twenty Bald Eagles and eleven Red-tailed Hawks. We traveled upstream along the Lackawaxen to the PPL Dam site and saw one additional juvenile BE soaring in the vicinity of swing bridge. Near Appert we added a Belted Kingfisher and Mallard.

We concluded our field trip at 3:30 PM.

Next Searches for Eagles - February 7, 2016, and March 6, 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 21 Bald Eagles, 11 Red-tailed Hawks, and 2 Cooper's Hawks we saw:

Canada Goose

Mallard

Common Merganser

Bald Eagle

Red-tailed Hawk

Cooper's Hawk

Ring-billed Gull

Rock Pigeon

Mourning Dove

Belted Kingfisher

Red-bellied Woodpecker

Pileated Woodpecker

Downy Woodpecker

Hairy Woodpecker

Northern Flicker

Blue Jay

American Crow

Common Raven

Black-capped Chickadee

Tufted Titmouse

White-breasted Nuthatch

Red-breasted Nuthatch

Eastern Bluebird

American Robin

Cedar Waxwing

White-throated Sparrow

Dark-eyed Junco

Northern Cardinal

American Goldfinch
House Sparrow