

## Search for Eagles, Dr. S. Marie Kuhnen - Memorial Field Trip Series, Saturday 8 March 2014

The final 2013-14 Dr. S. Marie Kuhnen Memorial Field Trip, Search for Eagles took place in the Delaware Valley Saturday, March 8, 2014 from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The temperature at the start was 25 degrees and at the finish 43 degrees. It was a clear day 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 151 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 that included seeing 40 species of birds including 26 Bald Eagles (BE) and 13 Red-tailed Hawks. Portions of the Delaware River were frozen and the eagles we observed were concentrated in areas of open water in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and Upper Delaware.

The first raptor of the day was a Red-tailed Hawk perched at Heller's farm. Bald Eagles (BE) two adults were spotted at the shale bank just north of Tom's Creek picnic ground. The first bird was perched in the vicinity of where a nest used to be. The second bird flew from the north into the bank and landed on a pile of leaves, scratched around for a few minutes then took flight. At the Bushkill Access after our first Pileated Woodpecker and two Northern Flickers we saw a dozen American Robins, Robins were abundant throughout the day. On the river were Canada Goose, Common Merganser, Black Duck, and Common Goldeneye. At the Eshback Access were two Red-tailed Hawk, Downy Woodpecker, American Crow, White-throated Sparrow, and American Goldfinch.

Dingmans Ferry Access Area yielded 200 Canada Goose, 6 Common Merganser and Dark-eyed Junco. A Red-tailed Hawk was seen as we exited. Returning to RT 209 north we saw another Red-tailed Hawk perched on the cliff above the highway. Our third adult BE was perched a half mile north of the intersection of Routes 209 & 739 west of the highway. The BE nest near mile marker 17 west of Route 209 has had birds in and around it for the past few weeks, there was no BE the nest today; however, I did see one perched on the rim of the nest on Friday. This nest has been active for the past six years.

No eagles at Milford Beach; however, we added Bluebird and Downy Woodpecker.

At the Callahan House, satellite office of the Brandwein Institute, we watched feeder birds and added White-throated and Song Sparrow.

Two BE were on the Milford Mott Street nest that has been reconstructed. Last year the former nest crashed to the ground and the BEs immediately began constructing a new nest on the north side of the Sawkill. On Mott Street we added Red-breasted Nuthatch and Brown Creeper.

On Ann Street at the park that overlooks the Delaware we spotted Northern Cardinal. Along Route 209 North near the Kittatinny Camp Ground were Raven in flight and Red-tailed Hawk.

We continued to the Best Western, no eagles; however, Mallard, Common Mergansers, Common Goldeneye, and Canada Goose were there. At the River View Restaurant near where PA, NJ, and NY meet, in addition to Ring-billed Gull were ten duck species: American Black Duck, Mallard, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Buffelhead, Common Merganser, and Red-breasted Merganser. Leaving the Riverview we spotted a Red-tailed Hawk perched on a lamppost at the Pennsylvania Welcome Center.

We crossed the I84 bridge and returned with the hope of spotting BE upriver near the cemetery. No luck; however, we added Black Vulture, 7 Turkey Vulture, and a Red-tailed Hawk.

We enjoyed a rest stop at the Pennsylvania Welcome Center where we again saw the Red-tailed Hawk and viewed a 701 pound Trophy Black Bear, as well as a diorama of the Roebling Bridge.

Eddy Farm Resort overlook presented Pileated Woodpecker, Common Goldeneye and Common

Mergansers.

By Noon we were at the Hawks Nest historical marker with a great vista and our tenth Red-ailed Hawk soaring above the ridge. BE number seven was perched near Indian Head Canoe Livery.

At the Pond Eddy nest sight, a White Pine on the PA side of the river we found the nest with one BE in it, its head protruding slightly above the center of the nest. Another BE was soaring above the ridge on the New York side of the river. We continued to the Mongaup Falls Observation Blind.

As we crossed the bridge approaching the Observation Blind we searched upstream for BEs, there was one adult soaring above the treetops. No BE from the blind. Plank Road also lacked BE. No BEs were at the Rio Reservoir Dam. We returned to the Delaware and traveled upriver where we saw an immature BE, our first, in the river at the outflow of an eel weir. The bird took flight downriver as we approached. At Cedar Rapids we watched an immature BE on the ice while two Pileated Woodpeckers flew in front of us. At Minisink Ford Observation Blind an immature BE flew over our heads.

On the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware 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 Eagle Institute is open weekends.

At the confluence of the Lackawaxen and Delaware rivers there were eagle volunteer viewers in the parking area. Here is where we experienced the most eagle activity for the day. As we approached two immature BE soared from the NY to PA side of the river as 3 Turkey Vultures and a Red-tailed Hawk moved about. Soon, we had an additional 5 adult BE as well as immature BE in the air simultaneously. Above the road the north side of the Lackawaxen river is an active BE nest, we looked but no BE was present.

By the time we reached the Lackawaxen we had seen 25 Bald Eagles. We traveled upstream along the Lackawaxen and saw another BE perched at a nest.

We concluded our field trip with a Cooper's Hawk at 3:30 p.m. at the Lackawaxen River.

An Eagle identification field guide and a "Search for Eagles" hand-out was provided for participants by the Paul F-Brandwein Institute.

In addition to the 26 Bald Eagles we saw:

Canada Goose	Downy Woodpecker
American Black Duck	Northern Flicker
Mallard	Blue Jay
Canvasback	American Crow
Redhead	Common Raven
Ring-necked Duck	Black-capped Chickadee
Lesser Scaup	Tufted Titmouse
Common Goldeneye	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Bufflehead	White-breasted Nuthatch
Common Merganser	Brown Creeper
Red-breasted Merganser	Eastern Bluebird
Black Vulture	American Robin
Turkey Vulture	European Starling
Cooper's Hawk	Song Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	White-throated Sparrow
Rock Pigeon	Dark-eyed Junco
Mourning Dove	Northern Cardinal
Belted Kingfisher	American Goldfinch
Pileated Woodpecker	House Sparrow
Red-bellied Woodpecker	