

Search for Eagles, Dr. S. Marie Kuhnen - Memorial Field Trip Series, 3 March 2024

The eighth and final in a series of Dr. S. Marie Kuhnen Memorial Field Trips, Search for Eagles, sponsored by the Brandwein Institute took place in the Delaware Valley Sunday, March 3, 2024 from 8:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m. Temperature at the start was 43 degrees and finish 57 degrees. The day which was warm, clear and partly cloudy began with watching feeder birds at home and at PEEC that included, Dark-eyed Junco, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, and Brown Creepers. We logged 179 miles in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and Upper Delaware Scenic River from Fernwood on Route 209 to the conclusion along the headwaters of the Lackawaxen.

Jack Padalino, president emeritus of Brandwein Institute, led the search that included four participants and recorded 38 bird species including 17 Bald Eagles, 19 Red-tailed Hawks, 4 Red-shouldered Hawks, a Peregrine Falcon, a Cooper's Hawk, and 3 Common Ravens.

The first eagle we saw was an adult perched above the shale bank north of Tom's Creek where an additional eagle had been seen earlier. Next a juvenile eagle was perched in a field south of Tom's Creek. Another perched on the ridge above the Bushkill Access. We added two adult eagles perched atop metal utility pole #1739 at Fernwood. A Red-tail was perched at Valley View Group Campground and a number more were spotted between Eshback's and Dingmans Camp Ground. No eagles at Eshbacks or the Dingmans Ferry Bridge Access. We searched the Dingmans Cemetery none were present. Our next Bald Eagle in the nest near the river from RT 209 mile marker 16 was spotted hunkered down, probably incubating eggs. The same bird was there last search. We also added Red-tails, Common Ravens, and a Cooper's Hawk. At Milford Beach we drew a blank. No eagles along River Road. We checked the nest near the Pierce House but no eagles were present. My best guess is that there is an eagle there we can't see hunkered in the nest incubating eggs.

From the Kittatinny Camp Ground pull over we located a pair of Common Ravens north of us west of I 84. Not much activity between there and Best Western. Our next stop was the Riverview Restaurant near where PA, NJ, and NY converge, a gaggle of Canada Geese were there. The Welcome Center is where a juvenile eagle and a few Red-tails were spotted. We checked the nest at the Port Jervis Laurel Grove Cemetery no eagles were seen The west end beach yielded a squabble of Ring-billed Gulls. Nothing from the Eddy Pond Resort overlook.

At the Hawks Nest historical marker where on occasion there is a Peregrine Falcon, we found one perched atop a tree devouring prey. We were able to view the falcon through a spotting scope with 50 power magnification. WOW, we were even able to see the notch in the falcon's beak as it was preying on a bird which we could not identify. As we watched It launched, rose high above, went into a stoop, then landed in tree. While we were at the overview an adult eagle, 3 Turkey Vultures and Red-tails soared above.

As we crossed the Mongaup River we located two adult eagles soaring high above. Checked the Indian Head PA nest, no luck. We did see two eagles soaring high above on the PA side of the river at Pond Eddy. We had not luck on the the Mongaup Observation Blind, Plank Road no sightings nor at the Rio Reservoir Dam, other that sighting a Red-shouldered Hawk.

We returned to the Delaware and traveled upstream, crossed the Roebling Bridge into PA and parked in the observation area at the Zane Gray Museum, we added a drake Bufflehead.



We traveled upstream on the Lackawaxen, checked the nest at the gaspipe crossing, and added our thirteenth eagle perched near the Rowlands bridge. An Adult eagle was perched next to the nest at Engvaldsen Road. An eagle also was perched near the nest at Appert Road then took flight. About 100 yards upstream from the Appert bird another was perched. The final treat of the search was to view the three tiered nests (image attached) and to discover an adult female incubating eggs in the uppermost nest.

The eagles' nests will be monitored on future Search for Eagles: Dec 2024, Jan, Feb, Mar, 2025

Eagle observation data that we collect are shared with the National Park Service, members of the Sussex County Bird Club, Eagle Institute, and Hawk Migration Association of North America HMANA.



In addition to the 17 Bald Eagles observed

Canada Goose
Mallard
Bufflehead
Common Merganser
Turkey Vulture
Red-shouldered Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Cooper's Hawk
Rock Pigeon
Mourning Dove
Belted Kingfisher
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker
Peregrine Falcon
Blue Jay
American Crow

Common Raven
Tufted Titmouse
White-breasted Nuthatch
Brown Creeper
Black-capped Chickadee
Eastern Bluebird
American Robin
European Starling
Dark-eyed Junco
White-throated Sparrow
Northern Cardinal
Red-winged Blackbird
Common Grackle
Brown-headed Cowbird
House Finch
Purple Finch
American Goldfinch
House Sparrow