



Field Guides Tour Report

Pennsylvania's Warblers & More: from Cerulean Warbler to Henslow's Sparrow 2017

May 23, 2017 to May 28, 2017

Tom Johnson & Doug Gochfeld

For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please [VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE](#).



We spent an afternoon in Clarion County watching Henslow's Sparrow (and Ruffed Grouse, Upland Sandpiper, and Pileated Woodpeckers). Photo by guide Doug Gochfeld.

I was fortunate to grow up in Pennsylvania, a bird-rich state that is frequently overlooked as a birding destination. When John Rowlett decided to retire and Field Guides stopped offering the "Virginia's Warblers" tour, I was excited to try a similar itinerary on my familiar home turf. May 2017 was the first running of our new tour, and I think that it went really well. We found 29 species of warblers and a wonderful suite of other species, even with a rainy day that posed some temporary meteorological challenges.

The tour kicked off in the lowlands of the Susquehanna River valley south of Harrisburg, where we sought and found Prothonotary Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Northern Parula, and Yellow-breasted Chat. Heading to the forested ridge-and-valley ripples north of Harrisburg, Acadian Flycatcher and Cerulean Warbler were the next hits to show up. As we cruised toward State College, we made a few riverside stops and found Warbling Vireo, Orchard and Baltimore Orioles, and a soaring Broad-winged Hawk. A post-dinner nightbirding outing near State College led us to find Eastern Whip-poor-will and an uncommon Northern Saw-whet Owl.

The morning of our second full day was nearly a washout as the central portion of Pennsylvania was covered by a large, wet low pressure system spinning across the state. We managed to eventually get into the field at the Scotia Barrens and found Black-billed Cuckoo, Golden-winged Warbler, Hooded Warbler, and more. In the afternoon, the rain abated and we drove west to Clarion County where we found plenty of Henslow's Sparrows at The Piney Tract. Other highlights included Upland Sandpiper, Ruffed Grouse, Pileated Woodpecker, Grasshopper Sparrow, and more!

The next day, we ate breakfast at Bear Meadows, accompanied by a wonderful dawn chorus that included Northern Waterthrush, Canada Warbler, Red-headed Woodpecker, Pine Siskin, Black-throated Blue Warbler, and more. The scope views of the Louisiana Waterthrush were simply unreal! From Bear Meadows, we stopped at Bald Eagle State Park and found Blue-winged Warbler, nesting Cliff Swallows, and late migrants in the form of Red-breasted Merganser and Common Loon. Lunch was a picnic at Hyner Run State Park with Red-breasted Nuthatches, Blackburnian Warblers, and a singing Winter Wren. After checking in to our hotel in Mansfield and enjoying dinner, we closed the evening with a long watch of a beautiful marsh called "The Muck," finding Wood Ducks, Virginia Rails, Marsh Wrens, Swamp Sparrows, Common Gallinule, and an unseasonable Canvasback.

The morning of our fourth day found us eating breakfast in the undisturbed mature forest of Colton Point State Park along the Pine Creek Gorge (also known as the Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania). A Porcupine joined us for breakfast (see the video below) and we found a wonderful set of forest birds including Golden-crowned Kinglet, Blue-headed Vireo, Least Flycatcher, Mourning Warbler, Dark-eyed Junco, and much more. Blackpoll and Bay-breasted Warblers were in a small migrant flock along an overlook of the gorge, too! Returning south to finish the tour, we stopped to enjoy an urban colony of Yellow-crowned Night-Herons in an old Harrisburg neighborhood. After dinner, we stopped at a favorite spot near Hershey and found a splendid red morph Eastern Screech-Owl before heading to bed.

Prior to heading to the Harrisburg airport to finish the tour, we had one final morning to seek out some species that eluded us earlier in the trip. A spin through Fort Indiantown Gap and Second Mountain was a great way to find Prairie Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Field Sparrow, and Yellow-throated Vireo - a great way to finish things off.

Doug and I want to thank everyone for joining us on our very first Pennsylvania Field Guides tour - it sure was a wonderful week full of excellent birds and a lovely group of birders.

We'll see you next time! Good birding,

Tom

KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: * = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

BIRDS

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

CANADA GOOSE (*Branta canadensis*) – Common and widespread.

WOOD DUCK (*Aix sponsa*) – Repeated, excellent views at The Muck in Tioga County and again in Colton Point SP.

MALLARD (*Anas platyrhynchos*) – Ours were at The Muck and on the Susquehanna River.

CANVASBACK (*Aythya valisineria*) – A male at The Muck was notable for the location and the very late date. It was particularly odd that a male Redhead was just a few miles away.

REDHEAD (*Aythya americana*) – An adult male was cruising around Lake Nessmuk in Tioga County. Like the Canvasback nearby, this bird represents a very late record for the species in PA.

HOODED MERGANSER (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) – One flew by us at Prescott Rd. in Lancaster County on our first morning. Later, we found babies at Lake Nessmuk and a few more were at The Muck.

COMMON MERGANSER (*Mergus merganser*) – 7 were on the small lake in Galeton.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER (*Mergus serrator*) – This was a surprise for late May - one flew past us at the Bald Eagle SP swimming beach.

RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) – Four were at Lake Nessmuk with the Redhead.

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

RUFFED GROUSE (*Bonasa umbellus*) – During our loop through Clarion County, a male grouse was standing in the middle of a back road. We viewed it from inside the vans, but by the time we got the scopes out, the bird walked off and disappeared into the woods. This species has declined substantially in Pennsylvania and is always a treat to find.

WILD TURKEY (*Meleagris gallopavo*) – Our turkeys were at the roadside during our drive to the grasslands of Clarion County.

Gaviidae (Loons)

COMMON LOON (*Gavia immer*) – One was a late migrant on the lake at Bald Eagle SP.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) – Fairly common - repeated sightings on rivers and lakes throughout our journey.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*) – Fairly common in Tioga County, especially around The Muck. Many flyovers around dusk.

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*) – One was in the Susquehanna River near Harrisburg where the species breeds.

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*) – We had several sightings of these attractive small herons including 4 at The Muck.

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nyctanassa violacea*) – On our final afternoon in Harrisburg, we stopped in at an urban colony where at least four beautiful adult night-herons were attending nests in huge sycamore trees.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*) – A few seen while driving near Harrisburg on the first day.

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*) – Common; seen each day.

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*) – One was along the Susquehanna River at Prescott Rd. in Lancaster Co., and another was fishing at Bald Eagle SP.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

NORTHERN HARRIER (*Circus cyaneus*) – A male coursed low over the grasslands at the Piney Tract while we searched for Henslow's Sparrows.

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*) – We saw this large accipiter on one occasion while driving on the rainy day.

BALD EAGLE (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) – A few sightings - at Bald Eagle SP (appropriately enough), Galeton Lake, and along the Susquehanna River near Harrisburg.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK (*Buteo platypterus*) – Repeated excellent sightings, including an adult that circled overhead while we were making a gas station stop.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – This is the common large hawk in Pennsylvania.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

VIRGINIA RAIL (*Rallus limicola*) – A family (adults and small black chicks) was extremely vocal and showed nicely a few times during our evening exploration of the The Muck.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*) – One of the common breeding shorebirds of Pennsylvania - our nicest view was of a family group with small chicks in Millerstown.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

UPLAND SANDPIPER (*Bartramia longicauda*) – The bird that we found in grasslands near the Piney Tract in Clarion County was one of just a couple to show up in Pennsylvania this spring. It was a treat to see this excellent long-distance migrant so well. The genus of Upland Sandpiper, *Bartramia*,

honors William Bartram, a Pennsylvania Quaker and ornithologist of the 1700s and 1800s.

AMERICAN WOODCOCK (*Scolopax minor*) – A few of these chunky "timberdoodles" flew up and past us during our nightbirding expedition to the Scotia Barrens.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

RING-BILLED GULL (*Larus delawarensis*) – A flock of immature birds was loafing on the swimming beach at Bald Eagle SP.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – Common in towns and cities. [I]

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*) – Widespread.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*) – One of these uncommon, handsome cuckoos popped up in front of us briefly during a rainstorm at the Scotia Barrens.

Strigidae (Owls)

EASTERN SCREECH-OWL (*Megascops asio*) – On our final evening together near Harrisburg, we visited a secret spot near my childhood home where we had phenomenal views of an adult red morph Eastern Screech-Owl at close range. Awesome!

NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL (*Aegolius acadicus*) – One sang its tooting song for a long while during our nightbirding outing near State College. It was difficult to track it down, and views were brief, but any encounter with this species is worth celebrating.

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

EASTERN WHIP-POOR-WILL (*Antrostomus vociferus*) – Wow! The male that showed off at the side of the road near State College was a real stunner. It was also amazing to hear the chorus from several of these fine birds through the evening.

Apodidae (Swifts)

CHIMNEY SWIFT (*Chaetura pelagica*) – Common overhead in towns and cities.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus colubris*) – One perched up for good views near Colyer Lake in Centre County.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

BELTED KINGFISHER (*Megaceryle alcyon*) – One was at The Muck during our evening watch there; another was a high flyover at Fort Indiantown Gap on our final morning.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) – Three were highly vocal and showy during our breakfast in Bear Meadows Natural Area near State College.

RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes carolinus*) – A few showed off at Prescott Road on our first morning.

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER (*Sphyrapicus varius*) – During breakfast along the Pine Creek Gorge, a few members of the group saw a drumming male.

DOWNY WOODPECKER (*Picoides pubescens*) – Fairly common.

HAIRY WOODPECKER (*Picoides villosus*) – Ours were at the Scotia Barrens and Colton Point SP.

NORTHERN FLICKER (YELLOW-SHAFTED) (*Colaptes auratus auratus*) – Fairly common and active during our tour.

PILEATED WOODPECKER (*Dryocopus pileatus*) – Great views of these large woodpeckers in Clarion County and again at Bald Eagle SP.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*) – On our first morning, we saw this small falcon near the Harrisburg airport.

PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*) – Our first birds of the tour! Before dinner at the Appalachian Brewing Company, we scoped a nest on a ledge on the Rachel Carson Building in Harrisburg (no, really! That's the name of the building that houses PA's Department of Environmental Protection) from the parking lot.

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE (*Contopus virens*) – Common and widespread in forested habitats.

ACADIAN FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax virens*) – One was singing and very showy along Stoney Creek near Harrisburg on our first morning. "Pizza!"

ALDER FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax alnorum*) – On our final day in Tioga County, we saw a pair of these small flycatchers and heard them giving their "pip" calls along the edge of a beaver meadow. Vocalizations are key to identification, especially with respect to separating this species from the very similar Willow Flycatcher.

WILLOW FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax traillii*) – While we were still recovering from the close Upland Sandpiper near the Piney Tract, a vocal pair of these flycatchers showed off on a fenceline.

LEAST FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax minimus*) – We scoped one that was singing "Quebec!" near the campground bathrooms at Colton Point SP.

EASTERN PHOEBE (*Sayornis phoebe*) – Common and widespread.

GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus crinitus*) – While looking for a Tennessee Warbler that was singing along Stoney Creek, we found a vocal pair of these large, boisterous, yellow-bellied flycatchers checking out a nest cavity along the road.

EASTERN KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus tyrannus*) – Good views at Prescott Road and again at Fort Indiantown Gap.

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO (*Vireo flavifrons*) – On our final morning, this canopy-loving vireo was singing "three-eight" at Fort Indiantown Gap and eventually showed for nice overhead views.

BLUE-HEADED VIREO (*Vireo solitarius*) – One in particular showed nicely near the vista of the Pine Creek Gorge in Colton Point SP.

WARBLING VIREO (*Vireo gilvus*) – Fairly common, especially along the Susquehanna and Juniata Rivers. We had great views in Millerstown in the same tree that had Baltimore and Orchard Orioles.

RED-EYED VIREO (*Vireo olivaceus*) – Seen each day and heard in all forested habitats - one of the most common breeding birds in Pennsylvania.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

BLUE JAY (*Cyanocitta cristata*) – Common and widespread.

AMERICAN CROW (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) – Very common.

FISH CROW (*Corvus ossifragus*) – We saw these small, southern crows and heard their nasal "uh-uh" calls a few times in the Harrisburg area at the beginning and end of the tour.

COMMON RAVEN (*Corvus corax*) – Good views of this huge forest corvid on the northern part of our route, including Galeton Lake (where soaring overhead with a Bald Eagle) and Colton Point SP.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) – This mouse-colored swallow was common during the tour, particularly near water.

PURPLE MARTIN (*Progne subis*) – Two flew over at Bald Eagle SP (where uncommon) and another one called overhead at Fort Indiantown Gap.

TREE SWALLOW (*Tachycineta bicolor*) – Quite common.

BANK SWALLOW (*Riparia riparia*) – One was mixed in with other swallows at The Muck.

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*) – Very common.

CLIFF SWALLOW (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) – Great views in the northern part of the route, especially at Bald Eagle SP where we got to see many adults collecting mud and building nests at a highway maintenance shed.

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

CAROLINA CHICKADEE (*Poecile carolinensis*) – Good views south of the chickadee hybrid zone including at Prescott Road in Lancaster County.

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE (*Poecile atricapillus*) – Very common in the north. This species hybridizes with Carolina Chickadees in a narrow strip along the southern edge of the Appalachians near Harrisburg, but we made sure to find pure birds outside the hybrid zone to check out!

TUFTED TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus bicolor*) – These crested songbirds were fairly common in the southern part of the route - several were at Prescott Road, Stoney Creek Valley, and Fort Indiantown Gap.

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta canadensis*) – A male was extremely vocal in Norway Spruces above our picnic table at Hyner Run SP as we ate lunch.

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta carolinensis*) – Common in deciduous woodlands; particularly good views at Colton Point SP. The Pennsylvania birds are part of the eastern subspecies group.

Certhiidae (Treecreepers)

BROWN CREEPER (*Certhia americana*) – One sang and hatched around on tree trunks at Colton Point SP on our final full day.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

HOUSE WREN (*Troglodytes aedon*) – Common - mostly heard singing but we saw a few on our final day.

WINTER WREN (*Troglodytes hiemalis*) – We heard a few singing their magical, long songs, but we weren't able to see one - our first was at Hyner Run SP and another was at Colton Point SP.

MARSH WREN (*Cistothorus palustris*) – Several were singing at The Muck. With only small pockets of freshwater wetlands in north-central PA, this species is local and rare here.

CAROLINA WREN (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) – Fairly common, especially in the south where we found these loud wrens at Prescott Rd. and Stoney Creek Valley.

Poliophtilidae (Gnatcatchers)

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila caerulea*) – These little sprites showed very nicely along the Susquehanna River at Prescott Rd. in Lancaster County.

Regulidae (Kinglets)

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus satrapa*) – Plantations of Norway Spruces host small pockets of these boreal songbirds. We found them on the edge of Colton Point SP in Tioga County.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

EASTERN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia sialis*) – These familiar thrushes appeared up close in Stoney Creek Valley and at the Millerstown Area Community Park.

VEERY (*Catharus fuscescens*) – These lovely rust-peach thrushes are fairly common in northern PA forests. We had some nice views along the side of the road at Bear Meadows.

WOOD THRUSH (*Hylocichla mustelina*) – A common voice in the forest - one of these spot-breasted thrushes showed well at Scotia Barrens.

AMERICAN ROBIN (*Turdus migratorius*) – Very common.

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

GRAY CATBIRD (*Dumetella carolinensis*) – Very common and extremely vocal.

BROWN THRASHER (*Toxostoma rufum*) – We found these striking mimids on several occasions, including several at the Piney Tract.

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*) – Widespread, especially in the southern part of the route.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) – Very common, especially in towns and cities.

Bombycillidae (Waxwings)

CEDAR WAXWING (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) – Common and widespread. These birds feast on insects in the summer and then largely switch to fruit in the winter.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

OVENBIRD (*Seiurus aurocapilla*) – This woodland warbler is one of the loudest and most persistent voices of Pennsylvania in springtime. Good views in Clarion County and also at Colton Point SP.

WORM-EATING WARBLER (*Helmitheros vermivorum*) – On our final morning on Second Mountain, a singing male eventually showed close to the road after tantalizing us with its dry trill for several minutes.

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH (*Parkesia motacilla*) – We found several of these wonderful warblers along fast-flowing streams in Northern PA. The perfect view of the bird that we scoped on a song perch below Bear Meadows would be extremely difficult to top.

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) – A scarce breeder in the northern tier of PA, one individual sang and popped out briefly in roadside thickets at Bear Meadows.

GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) – Though the rain threatened to put a damper on our efforts, we found a stunning male singing low in the shrubs at Scotia Barrens near State College. This species has been in trouble in PA as Blue-winged Warblers hybridize with Golden-winged Warblers. Hybrids are increasingly common in this part of the range, whereas pure-looking Golden-wings are declining quickly.

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER (*Vermivora cyanoptera*) – A male sang at close range and showed off its yellow, blue, and white colors along Upper Greens Run at Bald Eagle SP.

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER (*Mniotilta varia*) – This attractive, stripey warbler entertained us with its nuthatch-like antics in several locations along our route.

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER (*Protonotaria citrea*) – A brilliant, golden male sang for us above a canal trail along the Susquehanna River south of Harrisburg. This southern species is fairly restricted in PA, so we were fortunate to watch it so well in the scope.

TENNESSEE WARBLER (*Oreothlypis peregrina*) – A male sang its piercing, three-parted song and showed briefly along the road through the Stoney Creek Valley north of Harrisburg. This slim, gray, white, and olive warbler is a migrant that does not breed in Pennsylvania.

MOURNING WARBLER (*Geothlypis philadelphia*) – A pair of these fine, skulky warblers chipped, sang, and perched up for us in a recently cleared area in the forest near Colton Point SP. Seeing this species so well was surely a highlight of the tour.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT (*Geothlypis trichas*) – Common and widespread.

HOODED WARBLER (*Setophaga citrina*) – The black, yellow, olive, and white of this striking warbler impressed us at the Scotia Barrens where we saw it well during a rainstorm. We saw another near Harrisburg and heard more singing at Colton Point SP.

AMERICAN REDSTART (*Setophaga ruticilla*) – Quite common and widespread.

CERULEAN WARBLER (*Setophaga cerulea*) – We found these uncommon forest warblers atop Peters Mountain north of Harrisburg. Just before our picnic lunch, we walked a short distance down the Appalachian Trail after hearing the buzzy, ascending song of this fine bird - and then, all of a sudden, there he was right in front of us in his blue and white glory! Outstanding!

NORTHERN PARULA (*Setophaga americana*) – Our best views were of the singing male along the canal trail at Prescott Rd. on our first morning.

MAGNOLIA WARBLER (*Setophaga magnolia*) – Two different females gave us our best views at Bear Meadows and again at Colton Point SP, but we heard many males and saw a few as well.

BAY-BREASTED WARBLER (*Setophaga castanea*) – One singing male was an unexpected migrant that we encountered along the western rim of the Pine Creek Gorge.

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER (*Setophaga fusca*) – Several males performed admirably. These flame beauties sang for us and displayed their orange, black, and white plumage at several locations in the north including Hyner Run SP and Colton Point SP, where we even saw a female at a nest!

YELLOW WARBLER (*Setophaga petechia*) – This widespread warbler was fairly common in edge habitats and scrub.

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER (*Setophaga pensylvanica*) – Very common in forest and edge habitats in northern Pennsylvania. A flock of these fine warblers were along the roadside at Scotia Barrens and responded very strongly to pishing!

BLACKPOLL WARBLER (*Setophaga striata*) – A few crisply-plumaged males, late migrants on their way north to the boreal forest, were singing in Colton Point SP and at Second Mountain.

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER (*Setophaga caerulescens cairnsi*) – Stellar looks at a "Not so laz-y!" male along a stream at Bear Meadows. We even saw the male's white hankerchief.

PINE WARBLER (*Setophaga pinus*) – A long-tailed, heavy-billed male showed in an isolated pine tree at Scotia Barrens on our rainy day.

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER (ALBILORA) (*Setophaga dominica albilora*) – The male "Sycamore Warbler" (white-lore, short-billed subspecies of Yellow-throated Warbler) that came in overhead at Prescott Road was a real stunner. Characteristically, he stayed above us in riverside sycamores, but gave us a good look nonetheless.

PRAIRIE WARBLER (*Setophaga discolor*) – On our final morning at Fort Indiantown Gap, we found a lovely singing male in a regenerating clearcut at the base of Second Mountain.

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER (*Setophaga virens*) – Fairly common in northern PA, where we found them on several occasions at Bear Meadows and Colton Point SP.

CANADA WARBLER (*Cardellina canadensis*) – A pair came in and showed off for us in a hemlock and rhododendron thicket at the edge of Bear Meadows.

WILSON'S WARBLER (*Cardellina pusilla*) – A migrant male was at the edge of the beaver meadow where we found the Alder Flycatchers. This striking yellow warbler with a black cap came out in the open about three feet off the ground and gave us some wonderful views.

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT (*Icteria virens*) – One sang its persistent, loud song along the railroad tracks at Prescott Rd. on our first morning and eventually perched in full view for several song bouts. Following the conclusion of the tour, the AOS published its checklist supplement and an exciting change is the elevation of this species to family status. Now, instead of being a strange warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat is recognized as the sole member of the family Icteriidae!

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW (*Ammodramus savannarum*) – We followed the high pitch, buzzy song until we found this smoothly patterned sparrow in the grasslands at Piney Tract.

HENSLOW'S SPARROW (*Ammodramus henslowii*) – This range-restricted sparrow of midwestern US shrubby grasslands was a primary target for our loop into western PA and a new life bird for many in the group. In this state, the species is very fond of the grassland habitat created during the

landscape rehabilitation of strip mines. We found several lustily singing males in the Piney Tract, a PA state game land in Clarion County

CHIPPING SPARROW (*Spizella passerina*) – Common and widespread.

FIELD SPARROW (*Spizella pusilla*) – Another addition to our list on the tour's final morning - we spotted a singing male on a roadside wire through a clearcut on Fort Indiantown Gap, and he posed nicely for scope views.

DARK-EYED JUNCO (SLATE-COLORED) (*Junco hyemalis carolinensis*) – These handsome forest sparrows are common at Colton Point SP.

SONG SPARROW (*Melospiza melodia*) – Very common and widespread.

SWAMP SPARROW (*Melospiza georgiana*) – Amazing views along the boardwalk at The Muck in Tioga County

EASTERN TOWHEE (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) – Lovely views at Scotia Barrens.

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

SCARLET TANAGER (*Piranga olivacea*) – Common in mature deciduous forest throughout the state, including the edge of the Scotia Barrens and Colton Point SP.

NORTHERN CARDINAL (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) – Quite common, especially in the southern stretches of our route with lots of shrubby edge habitat.

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) – A red, black, and white male sang near the bathrooms at Colton Point SP and distracted us temporarily from the Blackburnian Warblers and Least Flycatchers.

INDIGO BUNTING (*Passerina cyanea*) – Very common in forest edges and shrub habitat.

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

BOBOLINK (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*) – These striking, long-distance migrant blackbirds were singing their crazed songs in grasslands in Centre and Tioga counties.

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) – Common in open habitats.

EASTERN MEADOWLARK (*Sturnella magna*) – A few appeared at the Piney Tract and nearby Mount Zion.

COMMON GRACKLE (*Quiscalus quiscula*) – Common, especially along the Susquehanna and Juniata rivers.

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*) – Seen on every day - a widespread nest parasite in open and forested habitats.

ORCHARD ORIOLE (*Icterus spurius*) – At least one pair chattered and flitted through the sycamores at the edge of the Juniata River in Millerstown.

BALTIMORE ORIOLE (*Icterus galbula*) – Excellent views of males at Millerstown, Bald Eagle SP, and other sites near water.

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

HOUSE FINCH (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) – Common, especially near towns.

PINE SISKIN (*Spinus pinus*) – One of these streaky finches landed atop a tree at Bear Meadows while we ate breakfast. This species is an irregular breeder throughout PA's forests - in some years, they may be common across the northern part of the state, but in others, they are almost completely absent.

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH (*Spinus tristis*) – Common and widespread.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – Common in towns. [I]

MAMMALS

VIRGINIA OPOSSUM (*Didelphis virginianus*) – One crossed the road on our nightbirding excursion to the Scotia Barrens.

EASTERN COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) – Quite common.

PLAIN EASTERN CHIPMUNK (*Tamias striatus*) – A frequent site in forested habitats throughout the state.

WOODCHUCK (*Marmota monax*) – Common on grassy roadsides and meadows.

EASTERN GRAY SQUIRREL (*Sciurus carolinensis*) – A common animal in deciduous forests.

RED SQUIRREL (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*) – Common in coniferous forests in PA

MUSKRAT (*Ondatra zibethica*) – Ours was swimming in the water at The Muck.

NORTH AMERICAN PORCUPINE (*Erethizon dorsatum*) – Wow - this was definitely a big highlight. As Doug and I cleaned up our breakfast picnic at Colton Point SP, one of these spikey beasts trundled across the clearing and climbed up a tree where it kept a watchful eye on us.

RED FOX (*Vulpes vulpes*) – A family group of 8, mostly kits, were on the hill behind us as we watched the Upland Sandpiper and Willow Flycatchers near Mount Zion.

WHITE-TAILED DEER (*Odocoileus virginianus*) – Common - seen several times in the northern tier of PA.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 143 bird taxa and 10 mammal taxa