



The Biweekly Newsletter for the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology

Thursday, February 5th, 2026

Love is in the air! With that spirit in mind, we want to take a moment to appreciate the community around us. Thank you for being a valued member of the PSO. Whether you have been here for years or just discovered us, we appreciate you!

Now, let us dive into this week's updates.

If you have photos to share or any questions or comments about the newsletter, email me at: kaitlynstouch@gmail.com.

Happy birding!
-Kaitlyn Stouch
The PSO Pileated Editor

This edition's banner photo is courtesy of professional photographer Mark Nale.

PSO Themed Valentines

Looking for some funny, bird-themed Valentine's Day cards? We got you covered.
Valentines created by Kaitlyn Stouch.

Thank you for Robin
my heart <3



To:
From:

Will you be my
plover?



To:
From:

Wood you be mine,
Valentine?



To:
From:

I am Cuckoo about
you!



To:
From:

PSO February Webinar



Problem-Solving in a Changing World: How Do Eastern Bluebirds Respond to Noise Disturbance?

7 PM February 12th, 2026 via Zoom

Hosted by Sara Isgate

Register here:

https://psu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_mNMIUCgYSaSlmApdTWK6w

To view a full list of all our upcoming Webinars, visit [our events page](#) on our website.

This Week's Avian Action Alerts



1. REINSTATE THE ROADLESS RULE

Help protect our Nation's wildlife and wild forests. Tell Secretary Rollins and the Trump Administration:

Reinstate the Roadless Rule Now in our National Forests!

WRITE NOW

2. TELL CONGRESS TO PROTECT MIGRATORY BIRDS

For over a century, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) has served as a cornerstone of bird conservation in the United States, preventing "incidental take" of birds such as accidental killing, capture, or harassment. But despite the law's bipartisan support over the years, the current administration is making efforts to gut the MBTA, issuing a legal opinion that means industries are no longer required to take available steps to avoid killing migratory birds.

TAKE ACTION

3. GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT (GBBC) FEBRUARY 13 – 16, 2026

Spend time in your favorite places watching birds. Identify all the birds you see or hear, count them, and submit your counts to help scientists better understand and protect birds around the world. Watch birds for 15 minutes or more, at least once over the four days. You can even watch observations come in from all over the world since each submission becomes a glowing light on the [Bird Sightings Map](#).

If you already use eBird or Merlin, your submissions over the 4 days automatically count toward the GBBC.

PARTICIPATE

4. GOOD NEWS!

The Nature Conservancy acquired over 200 acres along the Allegheny Front in Cambria County to help protect rare birds that depend on grassland habitat. The property was transferred to the PA

Bureau of Forestry and is now part of Gallitzin State Forest.

[READ MORE](#)

-Laura Jackson, PSO Conservation Chair

<https://pabird.org/contact-laura-jackson>

Call for Applications- Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology Student Research Grant

Deadline: March 10

Awardees will be notified by March 31

The Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology (PSO) is sponsoring up to two \$500 student research grants in support of research on Pennsylvania's avifauna. We invite anyone to pass this news along to any students involved in research, as well as any professors who could share this announcement with their students.

If selected, the student will travel to the PSO Annual Meeting to give a talk (~30 minutes) about their work, AND/OR the student will submit an article to the Pennsylvania Birds journal, not more than two years after the award of the grant, describing their study and findings to the PSO membership. The recipient will also be awarded a one-year membership in the PSO.

Eligibility:

The award is designed to provide support to either graduate or undergraduate students in pursuit of a bachelor's degree, master's degree, or doctorate. The research should be conducted in support of a thesis or dissertation and eventually published. The student's academic institution does not need to be in Pennsylvania. The field work does not need to occur in the Commonwealth, however, there is a preference for projects with a Pennsylvania field work component.

Criteria:

Proposals will be judged for their scientific merit and the likelihood that the work will make a meaningful contribution to our understanding of Pennsylvania avifauna. Submissions must include the name of the student's academic institution, the corresponding department at the institution, the degree the student is pursuing, and the name of their academic or research advisor.

Research Proposal Document:

The body of the proposal should be a condensed version of the student's thesis/dissertation proposal, not to exceed 5 pages in length (not including any figures or tables). Please note whether Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee approval has been or will be obtained.

Each proposal should include a section on how the results of the proposed study will be helpful to future scientific understanding, conservation efforts, and/or land management implications.

Signed Letter indicating Student's Advisor's Approval:

In addition to the proposal document, each submission should include a brief, signed letter from the student's academic advisor verifying that the applicant is a student in good standing, and that they are receiving the advisor's support for the proposed project.

Submissions will be evaluated by a PSO committee. Submissions must be sent as pdf email attachments by March 10. Please send submissions or questions to Deb Grove at dsg4@psu.edu.

Award and Scholarship Nominations Due REMINDER



Photo by Doug Baird

Nominations for PSO's 2026 awards are due by **February 15**. We appreciate your consideration and nomination of deserving individuals and/or organizations.

The **Earl Poole Award** is presented annually to a person or persons who have made significant contributions to Pennsylvania's ornithology. This may be in the form of research, volunteer efforts, publications, field work, or any other pursuit that has increased our knowledge and understanding of the birdlife in Pennsylvania. To nominate someone for this award, please visit [this webpage](#). Past winners of the award can be found [here](#).

The **Conservation Award** is presented periodically to an individual or organization that has had a positive impact on bird conservation in Pennsylvania. To make a nomination for this award, [click here](#). Past winners of the award can be found [here](#).

[Email any questions to Carolyn Hendricks.](#)

Youth Scholarships are available to attend the 2026 PSO Festival in Blair County, June 19-21, 2026. The scholarships cover transportation, lodging, and meals for a child and parent/guardian. Please note that a parent/guardian or an adult designated by the youth's parent guardian must attend the festival with the scholarship recipient. To nominate someone for a youth scholarship, [please visit](#)

[this link](#) to fill out the brief application form.

[Email any questions to Joe Gyekis.](#)

2026 PSO Breeding Bird Blitz for Conservation: Applications Open for Conservation Partners- Due March 1st



Osprey Butler Co Moraine by Jeanette Green

The Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology (PSO) is excited to announce that applications are now open for organizations interested in becoming 2026 Conservation Partners through this year's Breeding Bird Blitz for Conservation. We are thrilled to continue this annual tradition of raising funds for bird conservation and are eager to collaborate with nonprofit organizations dedicated to conserving Pennsylvania's Bird Species of Greatest Conservation Need.

Since 2021, the PSO Breeding Bird Blitz, together with our conservation partners, has raised \$92,318 to help fund 15 conservation initiatives across the Commonwealth. In 2025 alone, we awarded a total of \$25,000 to our three Conservation Partners. For 2026, we will consider applications for projects requesting up to \$10,000 in funding. We are excited to offer this much support to impactful, on-the-ground conservation projects for Pennsylvania's birds through the Breeding Bird Blitz.

To learn more about the Breeding Bird Blitz for Conservation, visit our website at <https://www.breedingbirdblitz.org>. If your organization is interested in applying to become a Conservation Partner, please complete the application available at <https://www.breedingbirdblitz.org/b4c-application>.

Even if you personally do not plan to apply, you may know an organization that would be a perfect fit. We encourage you to share this opportunity with local bird clubs, conservation groups, and nonprofit partners in your local community. Your help ensures this funding reaches projects that will make a real difference for bird species in need.

And don't forget—team registration for the Breeding Bird Blitz opens in April! In addition to our Conservation Partners, we rely on volunteer teams to participate, raise funds, and enjoy a great week of birding. If you are not a part of a project to apply to be a partner, you can always support bird conservation by forming a team! More information about the Blitz and the team competitions can be found on our website.

-Karter Witmer

Festival Sponsorship Opportunity Reminder

The 2026 PSO Birding Festival will take place June 19-21, 2026 at the Blair County Conventions Center. This year marks the 35th PSO Festival and its first visit to Blair County, an area rich in summer birding opportunities and ornithological history. The event will feature field trips led by local experts, speakers, and vendors with everything a birder needs: optics, books, art, and more. Sponsorship opportunities are available as detailed [on our website](#). Sponsorships may be paid through the PSO website at <https://pabirds.org/festival-sponsors/>. Or send a check to PSO, 2469 Hammertown Rd, Narvon, PA 17555-9730

Sponsorship payments must be received by March 31, 2026 to ensure inclusion on Festival materials.

For more details about sponsorship levels and more, [click here](#) or contact PSO President Brian Byrnes at brianjbyrnes79@gmail.com.

2026 County Spotlights-*OCTOBER COUNTY UPDATE*

Huntingdon County Birding Spotlight
March 13-16, 2026

Fayette County Birding Spotlight
April 24-27, 2026

Bradford County Birding Spotlight
October 16-19, 2026

Please note the new county for October 16th-19th!

Our [County Spotlights](#) are PSO-organized weekend field trips to lesser-birded counties in Pennsylvania. Be sure to save the dates for our 2026 County Spotlights! Graphics by Tony Desantis.

Organization Information

To email a PSO officer or Board Member, click on the name below.

Officers

President – [Brian Byrnes](#) (Delaware)

Vice-President – [Carolyn Hendricks](#) (Bedford)

Secretary – [Sheree Daugherty](#) (Allegheny)

Treasurer – [Franklin Haas](#) (Lancaster)

Board Members

[David Barber](#) (Schuylkill) , [Chelsea Beck](#) (Elk), [Joseph Gyekis](#) (Centre), [Laura Jackson](#) (Bedford), [Jeff Kenney](#) (Chester) [Mary Alice Koeneke](#) (Butler), [Wayne Laubscher](#) (Clinton), [Brian Miller](#) (Crawford), [Richard Rieger](#) (Schuylkill), [Brian Shema](#) (Allegheny), [Doug Wentzel](#) (Huntingdon), [Karter Witmer](#) (Tioga)

Newsletter Editor

[Kaitlyn Stouch](#) (Centre)

***Pennsylvania Birds* Editor**

[Mark Bonta](#) (Blair)

Mailing Address

PSO

2469 Hammertown Rd

Narvon PA 17555-9730

[View more info on our organization members here](#)



Did you Know...

We are on social media! We have a Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and even a Discord server for our members and friends. Make sure you join us on whatever your preferred platform is to get daily updates and chat with other birders around the state.



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