

Checklist of Birds Recorded in Erie County, Pennsylvania, Including *Presque Isle State Park*

Compiled by
Gerald M. McWilliams

2024



Bird Watching in Erie County, PA: An Historical Perspective

This, the latest edition of the Erie County, PA, bird checklist, is dedicated to Jean Stull Cunningham, who started formal bird record-keeping for Erie County and compiled the county's first-ever checklist. Jean founded the *Presque Isle Nature Club* in 1956 (now the *Presque Isle Audubon Society*), and co-authored



Jean Stull Cunningham 1929-2011

Sarah Stull © 2008

every checklist the *Presque Isle Audubon Society* published until her death in July, 2011. All of us who had the good fortune to know Jean, truly miss her en-

thusiasm for, and dedication to, the natural world.

The ornithological history of Erie County takes us back to B. H. Warren who mentions Erie County in his "[Report on the Birds of Pennsylvania](#)" in 1890, when Piping Plovers nested regularly along the lake shore. Few birders existed then, and bird

records came from visiting ornithologists and hunters — gunners, as they were called. W. E. Clyde Todd made periodic visits to Erie County and published his monumental

Continued on next page



Jerry McWilliams conducting a waterfowl survey at Presque Isle State Park

Roger Domm © 2013

work, "The Birds of Western Pennsylvania" in 1940. From the 1940s, until the mid-1950s, little bird activity was documented, but then birding, bird listing, and bird record-keeping really took off. Much has changed in what we know about birds since the 1950s. Canada Geese were still exciting to see and Double-crested Cormorants were considered rare well into the 1980s. Now several thousand might be seen in a single day. Bald Eagles nested only on Presque Isle, and only into the 1950s. In 2020, at least a dozen active eagle nests are known in the county. We've lost some breeding birds, like the Black Tern, which nested regularly on Presque Isle, and no active nests have been reported anywhere in Pennsylvania in the last few years. Recent waterfowl surveys along Lake Erie have changed the status of some species like Common and Red-throated Loon and all three scoter species, from rare and often irregular then, to common and regular now. Red-bellied Woodpeckers, once considered rare and irregular, are now per-

manent, common residents. Evening Grosbeaks, which in the 1970s and 1980s were abundant in winter, now appear only once every few years. As the climate warms, Neotropical migrants arrive earlier and depart later, correlating with the availability of insects. This has been noted dramatically over the last decade. Breeding Passerines, which typically did not arrive until early May, are now arriving in late April, and are heading south later in the Fall.

The digital version of this checklist is updated as frequently as daily to reflect observed changes in species' migration timing and abundance. Contributors to this checklist, both past and present, are to be commended for making it one of the most informative and detailed of local checklists.

Jerry McWilliams

Front Cover: Checklist compiler, Jerry McWilliams, at sunrise, looking at birds through his spotting scope while on the beach near Gull Point within Presque Isle State Park. Photo taken by James R. Hill, III, in 1980.

Checklist of Birds Recorded in Erie County, PA, Including *Presque Isle State Park*

Compiled in 2024 by
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Kathy Weaver © 2016

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Key to the Seasonal Abundance and Frequency Charts

1. Date Slivers: Each month on this checklist is divided into six 5-day date slivers that run from the 1st-5th, 6th-10th, 11th-15th, 16th-20th, 21st-25th, and from the 26th through the end of each month.

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR
.....

2. Abundance: The numerical ranges given below are guides to average seasonal abundance, and mean that the species occurs in such numbers that a competent observer at the appropriate time(s) and place(s) might see or hear approximately the given number of individuals in a single day of birding.

Common to Abundant - 26 or more per day (*thick line*)

26+ per day

Fairly Common - 6 to 25 per day (*medium line*)

6-25 per day

Uncommon to Rare - Less than 6 per day (*thin line*)

1-5 per day

3. Frequency: How often a species is reported in Erie County.

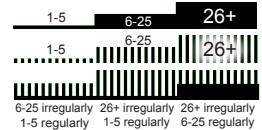
Regular - Recorded nearly every year (*solid line*)

Irregular - 2 or more years absence between sightings (*dashes*)

Variable - May vary widely from year to year (*solid line with dashes*)

Repeated observation of one or more birds indicating a duration of stay that spanned more than a single date sliver/five-day period, plus a departure date (*string of lower dashes followed by an upper dash*)

Single or repeated observation of one or more birds with a duration of stay confined to a single date sliver/five-day period (*elevated, single dash*)



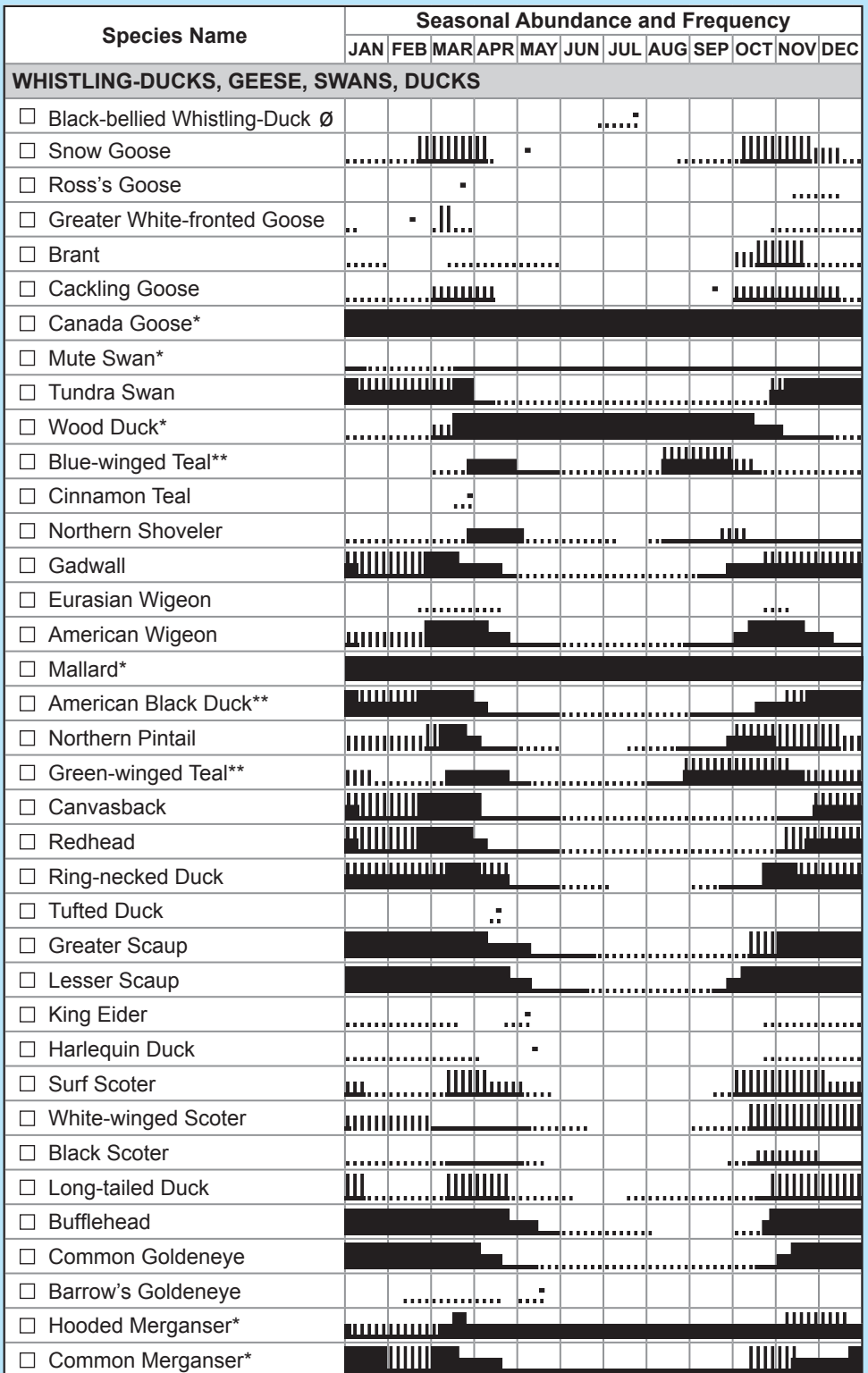
4. Breeding Status: No asterisk after a species' name indicates a non-breeding species. *A single asterisk after a species' name indicates regular, or nearly regular, breeding. **A double asterisk after a species' name indicates irregular breeding at intervals of 2 or more years. ***A triple asterisk after a species' name indicates an extant species no longer breeding in the county.

Bufflehead
Mallard*
Pied-billed Grebe**
Loggerhead Shrike***

5. Locations: Birds seen within Erie County, PA, but not within Presque Isle State Park.

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6. Species' names and groupings are listed in taxonomic order following Chesser, R. T., et al., 2023. Checklist of North American Birds. *North American Classification Committee (NACC) of the American Ornithological Society.*



Species Name	Seasonal Abundance and Frequency												
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	
WHISTLING-DUCKS, GEESE, SWANS, DUCKS (continued)													
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-breasted Merganser													
<input type="checkbox"/> Ruddy Duck													
TURKEYS, GROUSE, PHEASANTS													
<input type="checkbox"/> Wild Turkey*													
<input type="checkbox"/> Ruffed Grouse*													
<input type="checkbox"/> Ring-necked Pheasant*													
GREBES													
<input type="checkbox"/> Pied-billed Grebe**						
<input type="checkbox"/> Horned Grebe												
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-necked Grebe												
<input type="checkbox"/> Eared Grebe		
<input type="checkbox"/> Western Grebe												
PIGEONS, DOVES													
<input type="checkbox"/> Rock Pigeon*													
<input type="checkbox"/> Band-tailed Pigeon												
<input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Collared-Dove Ø												
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Ground Dove												
<input type="checkbox"/> White-winged Dove												
<input type="checkbox"/> Mourning Dove*													
CUCKOOS, NIGHTJARS													
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-billed Cuckoo*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-billed Cuckoo*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Nighthawk*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Chuck-will's-widow												
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Whip-poor-will*												
SWIFTS													
<input type="checkbox"/> Chimney Swift*												
HUMMINGBIRDS													
<input type="checkbox"/> Ruby-throated Hummingbird*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Rufous Hummingbird Ø												
RAILS, GALLINULES, COOTS, CRANES													
<input type="checkbox"/> King Rail												
<input type="checkbox"/> Virginia Rail*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Sora*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Gallinule*												
<input type="checkbox"/> American Coot**												
<input type="checkbox"/> Purple Gallinule												

Species Name	Seasonal Abundance and Frequency											
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
RAILS, GALLINULES, COOTS, CRANES (continued)												
<input type="checkbox"/> Sandhill Crane*												
AVOCETS												
<input type="checkbox"/> American Avocet												·
PLOVERS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-bellied Plover												
<input type="checkbox"/> American Golden-Plover												
<input type="checkbox"/> Killdeer*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Semipalmated Plover												
<input type="checkbox"/> Piping Plover*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Wilson's Plover					·	·	·	·	·			
<input type="checkbox"/> Snowy Plover					·		·					
SANDPIPERS, PHALAROPES												
<input type="checkbox"/> Upland Sandpiper**												
<input type="checkbox"/> Whimbrel												
<input type="checkbox"/> Long-billed Curlew								·	·			
<input type="checkbox"/> Hudsonian Godwit												
<input type="checkbox"/> Marbled Godwit												
<input type="checkbox"/> Ruddy Turnstone	·											
<input type="checkbox"/> Red Knot												·
<input type="checkbox"/> Surfbird								·				
<input type="checkbox"/> Ruff						·		·		·		
<input type="checkbox"/> Stilt Sandpiper												
<input type="checkbox"/> Sanderling	·		·									
<input type="checkbox"/> Dunlin												
<input type="checkbox"/> Purple Sandpiper												
<input type="checkbox"/> Baird's Sandpiper					·							·
<input type="checkbox"/> Least Sandpiper												
<input type="checkbox"/> White-rumped Sandpiper												
<input type="checkbox"/> Buff-breasted Sandpiper												
<input type="checkbox"/> Pectoral Sandpiper												
<input type="checkbox"/> Semipalmated Sandpiper												
<input type="checkbox"/> Western Sandpiper					·	·						
<input type="checkbox"/> Short-billed Dowitcher				·								
<input type="checkbox"/> Long-billed Dowitcher				·	·	·						
<input type="checkbox"/> American Woodcock*	·	·										
<input type="checkbox"/> Wilson's Snipe**												
<input type="checkbox"/> Spotted Sandpiper*												·

Species Name	Seasonal Abundance and Frequency											
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
SANDPIPERS, PHALAROPES (continued)												
<input type="checkbox"/> Solitary Sandpiper					
<input type="checkbox"/> Lesser Yellowlegs	•				
<input type="checkbox"/> Willet					
<input type="checkbox"/> Greater Yellowlegs			•
<input type="checkbox"/> Wilson's Phalarope						•
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-necked Phalarope						•		
<input type="checkbox"/> Red Phalarope	•								••
JAEGERS, GULLS, TERNS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Pomarine Jaeger	•				•					•	
<input type="checkbox"/> Parasitic Jaeger								•	
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-legged Kittiwake			•		•					•	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sabine's Gull										•	•
<input type="checkbox"/> Bonaparte's Gull
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-headed Gull
<input type="checkbox"/> Little Gull		•
<input type="checkbox"/> Laughing Gull				
<input type="checkbox"/> Franklin's Gull
<input type="checkbox"/> Ring-billed Gull*
<input type="checkbox"/> California Gull	•		•			
<input type="checkbox"/> Herring Gull*
<input type="checkbox"/> Iceland Gull				•	•
<input type="checkbox"/> Lesser Black-backed Gull
<input type="checkbox"/> Slaty-backed Gull		•									
<input type="checkbox"/> Glaucous Gull		••	•
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Black-backed Gull
<input type="checkbox"/> Least Tern								•	
<input type="checkbox"/> Caspian Tern***			
<input type="checkbox"/> Black Tern**			
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Tern**			
<input type="checkbox"/> Arctic Tern					•					
<input type="checkbox"/> Forster's Tern	••		
<input type="checkbox"/> Royal Tern							•					
LOONS, STORKS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-throated Loon	•			•	
<input type="checkbox"/> Pacific Loon	••										
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Loon
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Stork											•

Species Name	Seasonal Abundance and Frequency											
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
GANNETS, CORMORANTS, PELICANS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Gannet											
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Cormorant											.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Double-crested Cormorant												
<input type="checkbox"/> American White Pelican					
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown Pelican									
BITTERNS, HERONS, EGRETS, NIGHT-HERONS, IBISES, SPOONBILLS												
<input type="checkbox"/> American Bittern**
<input type="checkbox"/> Least Bittern*				
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Blue Heron*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Egret
<input type="checkbox"/> Snowy Egret					
<input type="checkbox"/> Little Blue Heron						
<input type="checkbox"/> Tricolored Heron				
<input type="checkbox"/> Reddish Egret								.				
<input type="checkbox"/> Western Cattle Egret					
<input type="checkbox"/> Green Heron*				
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-crowned Night-Heron
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-crowned Night-Heron						
<input type="checkbox"/> White Ibis								.				
<input type="checkbox"/> Glossy Ibis				
<input type="checkbox"/> Roseate Spoonbill ø							.					
AMERICAN VULTURES, OSPREY, KITES, EAGLES, HAWKS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Black Vulture		
<input type="checkbox"/> Turkey Vulture*
<input type="checkbox"/> Osprey*			
<input type="checkbox"/> Swallow-tailed Kite ø					.	.						
<input type="checkbox"/> Golden Eagle					
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Harrier**
<input type="checkbox"/> Sharp-shinned Hawk*
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooper's Hawk*
<input type="checkbox"/> American Goshawk
<input type="checkbox"/> Bald Eagle*
<input type="checkbox"/> Mississippi Kite		
<input type="checkbox"/> Snail Kite											.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-shouldered Hawk*
<input type="checkbox"/> Broad-winged Hawk*
<input type="checkbox"/> Swainson's Hawk					.						.	

Species Name	Seasonal Abundance and Frequency											
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
FLYCATCHERS (continued)												
<input type="checkbox"/> Acadian Flycatcher*						■	■	■	■	■		
<input type="checkbox"/> Alder Flycatcher*					■	■	■	■	■			
<input type="checkbox"/> Willow Flycatcher*					■	■	■	■	■			
<input type="checkbox"/> Least Flycatcher*					■	■	■	■	■			
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Phoebe*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Say's Phoebe				■	■							
VIREOS, SHRIKES												
<input type="checkbox"/> White-eyed Vireo**						■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-throated Vireo*						■	■	■	■	■		
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue-headed Vireo*						■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Philadelphia Vireo						■	■	■	■	■		
<input type="checkbox"/> Warbling Vireo*						■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-eyed Vireo*						■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Loggerhead Shrike***						■	■	■			■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Shrike	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
JAYS, CROWS, RAVENS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue Jay*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> American Crow*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Fish Crow					■	■						
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Raven*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
CHICKADEES, TITMICE												
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-capped Chickadee*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Boreal Chickadee	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Tufted Titmouse*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
LARKS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Horned Lark*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
SWALLOWS, MARTINS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Bank Swallow*						■	■	■	■	■		
<input type="checkbox"/> Tree Swallow*						■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Rough-winged Swallow*						■	■	■	■	■		
<input type="checkbox"/> Purple Martin*						■	■	■	■	■		
<input type="checkbox"/> Barn Swallow*						■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Cliff Swallow*						■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Cave Swallow						■	■	■	■	■	■	■
KINGLETS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Golden-crowned Kinglet*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Ruby-crowned Kinglet	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Species Name	Seasonal Abundance and Frequency											
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
FINCHES												
<input type="checkbox"/> Evening Grosbeak												
<input type="checkbox"/> Pine Grosbeak												
<input type="checkbox"/> House Finch*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Purple Finch*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Redpoll												
<input type="checkbox"/> Hoary Redpoll												
<input type="checkbox"/> Red Crossbill												
<input type="checkbox"/> White-winged Crossbill												
<input type="checkbox"/> Pine Siskin**												
<input type="checkbox"/> American Goldfinch*												
LONGSPURS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Lapland Longspur												
SNOW BUNTINGS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Snow Bunting												
AMERICAN SPARROWS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Grasshopper Sparrow*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Lark Sparrow												
<input type="checkbox"/> Lark Bunting												
<input type="checkbox"/> Chipping Sparrow*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Clay-colored Sparrow												
<input type="checkbox"/> Field Sparrow*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Fox Sparrow												
<input type="checkbox"/> American Tree Sparrow												
<input type="checkbox"/> Dark-eyed Junco*												
<input type="checkbox"/> White-crowned Sparrow												
<input type="checkbox"/> Harris's Sparrow												
<input type="checkbox"/> White-throated Sparrow												
<input type="checkbox"/> Vesper Sparrow*												
<input type="checkbox"/> LeConte's Sparrow												
<input type="checkbox"/> Nelson's Sparrow												
<input type="checkbox"/> Henslow's Sparrow**												
<input type="checkbox"/> Savannah Sparrow*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Song Sparrow*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Lincoln's Sparrow												
<input type="checkbox"/> Swamp Sparrow*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Spotted Towhee												
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Towhee*												

Species Name	Seasonal Abundance and Frequency											
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
CHATS, BOBOLINKS, BLACKBIRDS, ORIOLES												
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-breasted Chat											
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-headed Blackbird	•	••	•								•
<input type="checkbox"/> Bobolink*						•
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Meadowlark*
<input type="checkbox"/> Western Meadowlark ∅									
<input type="checkbox"/> Orchard Oriole*			
<input type="checkbox"/> Baltimore Oriole*
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-winged Blackbird*
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown-headed Cowbird*
<input type="checkbox"/> Rusty Blackbird
<input type="checkbox"/> Brewer's Blackbird			
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Grackle*
WOOD-WARBLERS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Ovenbird*				
<input type="checkbox"/> Worm-eating Warbler				
<input type="checkbox"/> Louisiana Waterthrush*			
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Waterthrush*			
<input type="checkbox"/> Golden-winged Warbler				
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue-winged Warbler*				
<input type="checkbox"/> Brewster's Warbler (hybrid)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Lawrence's Warbler (hybrid)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-and-white Warbler**			
<input type="checkbox"/> Prothonotary Warbler*			
<input type="checkbox"/> Swainson's Warbler				
<input type="checkbox"/> Tennessee Warbler				
<input type="checkbox"/> Orange-crowned Warbler				
<input type="checkbox"/> Nashville Warbler**				
<input type="checkbox"/> Connecticut Warbler				
<input type="checkbox"/> Mourning Warbler*				
<input type="checkbox"/> Kentucky Warbler**				
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Yellowthroat*				
<input type="checkbox"/> Hooded Warbler*				
<input type="checkbox"/> American Redstart*				
<input type="checkbox"/> Kirtland's Warbler				
<input type="checkbox"/> Cape May Warbler				
<input type="checkbox"/> Cerulean Warbler*				
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Parula				

Species Name	Seasonal Abundance and Frequency											
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
WOOD-WARBLERS (continued)												
<input type="checkbox"/> Magnolia Warbler*					■	■	■	■	■	■		
<input type="checkbox"/> Bay-breasted Warbler					■	■			■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Blackburnian Warbler*					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow Warbler*				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Chestnut-sided Warbler*					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Blackpoll Warbler					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-throated Blue Warbler**	■	■			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Palm Warbler					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Pine Warbler*					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-rumped Warbler*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler	■										■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-throated Warbler												
<input type="checkbox"/> Prairie Warbler**												
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-throated Gray Warbler												
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-throated Green Warbler*					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Canada Warbler*					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Wilson's Warbler					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
TANAGERS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Summer Tanager												
<input type="checkbox"/> Scarlet Tanager*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Western Tanager ø												
CARDINALIDS												
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Cardinal*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Rose-breasted Grosbeak*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue Grosbeak												
<input type="checkbox"/> Indigo Bunting*												
<input type="checkbox"/> Painted Bunting	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<input type="checkbox"/> Dickcissel												

The Following Species are Known to Have Occurred in Erie County, PA:

- Trumpeter Swan** (Recently introduced into eastern North America.) Status currently undetermined.
- Northern Bobwhite** (All sightings are believed to have been of escapees.)
- Band-rumped Storm-Petrel** (Remains found along shore of Lake Erie on 2/24/1998, origin unknown.)
- Yellow Rail** 1893-1896, 1900-1902, 1905
- Eskimo Curlew** (Probably extinct.) 1889
- Long-tailed Jaeger** (Remains found along shore of Lake Erie on 9/18/2020, origin unknown.)
- Thick-billed Murre** 1896, 1899, 1900
- Passenger Pigeon** (Extinct.) Reported in county up until 1890.
- Black-billed Magpie** (Sighting is believed to have been of an escapee.) 1955