

# Wissahickon Nature Club

## SPEAKER

May 9, **Ryan Tomazin** will present **Holistic Birding: Seeing Without Seeing, Hearing Without Hearing**. The slideshow and audio will focus on trying to deepen our senses beyond the obvious, for when birds don't behave and sing nicely in full view. The theories will draw upon Ryan's personal experiences with our eclectic feathered brethren. He has deliberately blurred out his chosen picture in order to punctuate his presentation.



This is our final meeting for the season. Our next meeting will take place on Thursday, September 12, 2019, 7:30 pm. Speaker **Don Weiss**.

**Kathy Saunders** is our new Programs Chairperson and she's off to a great start. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve the Wissahickon Nature Club. Thank you for all the help and input you've provided for me.

Susanne Varley

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<http://www.botsocwpa.org/>

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Outside My Window Outings Kate St. John 412.421.1566  
[www.birdsoutsidemymwindow.org/events/](http://www.birdsoutsidemymwindow.org/events/)

Three Rivers Birding Club  
Bob VanNewkirk, President 412.366.1694  
[www.3rbc.org](http://www.3rbc.org)

Western Pennsylvania  
Mushroom Club  
[wpamushroomclub.org](http://wpamushroomclub.org).  
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Bald Eagle webcam WATCH LIVE ANYTIME:  
<https://cbsloc.al/2MXuxfo>

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**TREASURER'S REPORT**  
ACCORDING TO TREASURER **DIANNE MACHESNEY**:

PREVIOUS BALANCE \$1383.43

EXPENSES -50.00

CURRENT BALANCE \$1333.43

**JUDY STARK** HAS SET UP OUR OUTINGS. VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR INFORMATION

**WORTH REPEATING**  
IF YOU, TOO, CAN COME TO LOVE THIS LAND AS OUR ANCESTORS DID, ALL THE PROBLEMS OF THE WORLD WILL FALL AWAY LIKE AUTUMN LEAVES IN THE WIND.

TONY TEN FINGERS  
WANBII NATA'U  
OGLALA LAKOTA



Adventures of a Wheelchair Birder

Susanne Varley  
Warblers and Shorebirds  
From the Nature ObserverNews Archives

One of the perks for working with a naturalist is that I get to go on some of the scouting missions. On May 9 Chuck and I scouted Presque Isle State Park for a class he was teaching for Frick Environmental Center. I was thrilled when a Ruffed Grouse crossed I-79 North in front of the car, arriving safely on the other side. Once we arrived at Presque Isle, our hopes of finding a Caspian Tern or Bonaparte's Gull were diminished when we discovered that the road to Beach 11 was closed. We didn't have time to mope. We quickly calculated our losses and went on to The Feather, the observatory overlooking Leo's Landing. The Feather was easy for me to walk. The wood deck flooring is new and smooth. We scoped a Green Heron and a Least Sandpiper wading through the mud.

We pulled over along Fry's Landing and decided to walk. Chuck walked ahead of me. I mostly kept my eye on the forest floor so I wouldn't trip but I also watched Chuck for clues when to duck down low or skirt around a branch. I only bonked my head once! At first we didn't hear a sound. We slowly wove around the trails listening and watching. The BEE-buzz of something really cool beckoned us. We picked up our pace and moved on to find a large Pin Oak peppered with warblers. We circled the oak so that the sun would be behind us. Chuck was patiently describing areas where the warblers were. There was so much going on in that one tree that even if I watched the wrong branch I would see somebody new. The Blue-winged Warbler was the most spectacular glistening in the sunlight. We stayed for a long time watching the songbirds arriving and departing and chattering like traffic controllers at a busy airport. I closed my eyes for a minute drinking in the sounds.

Finally a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak arrived claiming his perch. He stiffened his posture and turned his head sideways gazing soulfully into space. I wondered what he was thinking or if he had any clue how magnificent he looked with his rose ascot tucked into his formal white shirt. Did he even care what the birders thought of him?

Our last stop for the day was the famous Sidewalk Trail. Yellow Warblers were almost as abundant as the Red-winged Blackbirds – and every bit as territorial. The Yellows would lambaste each other with all the ferocity they could muster up to impress the prime ladies. A curious Common Yellowthroat followed us along the trail calling and peeking at us from the brush. He just didn't know what to make of my scooter. Chuck walked a dirt path that was tethered to the Sidewalk Trail to see if my scooter could scale the grade. He wasn't too sure if this was a good idea or not – but hey! This was an adventure! The trail wasn't all that steep, but it was challenging. I got off my scooter several times so that Chuck could lift it over the fallen logs. We clumsily made our way to the Ridge Trail and birded on. At one point I got stuck in the dry sand. I hit reverse, then forward, turning my front wheel from side to side trying to free myself. The raucous Blue Jays were annoyed and curious at the same time. The more I squirmed, the deeper I buried myself. Blue Jays seemed to surround me trying to figure out who in their right mind would ride a wheelchair through this part of the woods. Finally I swallowed my pride and asked Chuck to push me out. Good thing I wasn't too sarcastic beforehand. On the way back we got a really good look at a Palm Warbler and a Least Flycatcher with a total of 63 species for the day.

The past few years we really didn't have a spring. The seasons went from winter directly into summer. This spring has been wonderful. The pronounced winter we endured seems to have punched spring into an explosion of beauty. I'm up to 138 species and getting very close to my New Year's Resolution of 150 birds. What should I do next?