



THE DRUMMER



www.senecarocksaudubon.org

March, 2007

Volume 23, No. 5



Next Meeting – March 12
Room 150, Becker Hall

Social – 6:30 p.m. Program begins at 7:00 p.m.

Spring Wildflowers

Chuck Williams of the Biology Department at Clarion University will present our March program on Spring Wildflowers. The Spring Wildflower class he has offered in the past included a Saturday field trip to an area he discovered, which is a gold mine of spring wildflowers. One of the stops can be described as Trillium Heaven. Dr. Williams possesses an in-depth knowledge of the characteristics of Pennsylvania forests, and impressed this student with his ability to spot the rare American Yew plant while traveling 55 mph on a highway. This program is guaranteed to enlighten us about the beautiful wildflowers we will see when the snow melts. 🐣🐣

Conneaut Marsh Field Trip

by Jim Wilson

Mike Leahy: Trip Leader

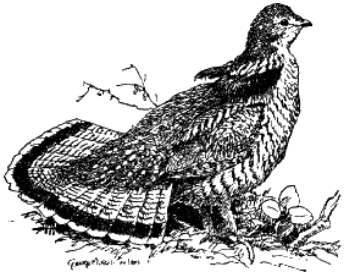
Saturday, March 31, 2007, 9:00 a.m.

This outing includes stops at Custards, The Wells, Geneva Marsh, Mama Bear's, Linesville, Pymatuning, and Miller's Ponds, plus a stop at a restaurant for lunch.

We begin this outing at the spillway bridge at Custards, off Route 285 at 9:00 a.m. Follow Route 322 west from Clarion, through Franklin, to Route 173 near Cochranon. Turn left and follow Route 173 south about 1 mile, through Cochranon and across French Creek, to Route 285. Follow Route 285 about 6 miles to Custards and turn right on Mercer Pike Road. Follow Mercer Pike Road about a half mile to the bridge. The drive from the Clarion area is as long as to Meadville. If you are a little late getting to Custards, don't worry – we will be scoping at the bridge for a while.

Seneca Rocks has taken this field trip in early spring for many years, and it is one of our favorite outings – last year we tallied 63 species. 🐣🐣

Birdseed Pickup until March 3 at Agway



The Drumming Log

by President Deb Freed

What's in a label?

You may have noticed the new format on the address label. These labels are generated by our national membership office and available on-line. The printed scannable code is helpful to the postal service. The ID number and expiration date printed along the top line is how the national organization identifies you as a member. If you need to contact Audubon about your membership, these numbers will be helpful. As mailer of the Drummer I cannot alter these labels, however, I can submit a change form to Audubon so that their membership services people can make corrections. Each month, expired memberships are removed from the labels and put on a list of deleted labels. I will use this list to generate a reminder to our members that their memberships have expired. All this applies to national memberships.

What about chapter memberships? I should soon have a chapter only membership list that will generate labels with expiration dates. That list will be maintained locally. The other way members get the Drummer is by going to the web-site www.senecarocksaudubon.org and clicking on Newsletters. There you will find all the Drummers dating back to August of 2003. The Drummer is in color and our e-Drummer subscribers can print single pages or the entire newsletter. By adding your name to

those who receive the Drummer on-line you save the chapter money each month! E-Drummer subscribers are notified when the latest Drummer is posted, usually four or five days before the mailed copied is delivered. I intend to check with all the e-Drummer subscribers to verify their e-mail addresses once each year with a mailed confirmation. If you want to join the e-Drummer subscribers, just send your e-mail address to Deb Freed at dfreed208@comcast.net.

If anyone has a comment or suggestion about maintaining an accurate membership list for SRAS or if anyone has a question about their Drummer subscription or label, please feel free to contact Deb Freed at 226-4719.



Short-eared Owl by Daniel S. Kilby

Great Backyard Bird Count Results

Participants in this year's count have broken an all-time record for number of checklists submitted, and the numbers are still going up. February 28 was the last date to enter your data or photos. To see the results, go to: <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>.

Current statistics from 2007 (as we go to press) -

- Total Checklists Submitted: 75,699
- Total Species Observed: 621
- Total Individual Birds Counted: 10,521,803





Bird Conservation On Non-native Grasslands

Mark your calendar for our upcoming Grassland Seminar, which will be held on Friday, June 1, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Health-Science Center in Clarion. Our SRAS committee has been hard at work assembling some of the most qualified grasslands experts in the region for this seminar, entitled *Bird Conservation on Non-native Grasslands*.

Dan Brauning, PGC Supervisor of the Wildlife Diversity Section, will speak on the history and future of Piney Tract. Speaker Danny Ingold, Ph.D., from Muskingum College, has done four years of sparrow research at The Wilds in Ohio. Presenter Duane Diefenbach, Ph.D., from Penn State University, has been studying birds on non-native grasslands in Pennsylvania, including Piney Tract.

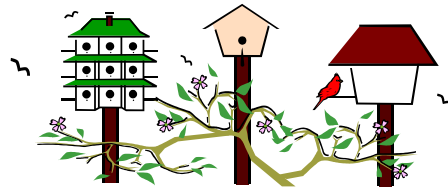
Guy Denny, Executive Director, and Nicole Cavender, Ph.D., Director of Restoration Ecology of The Wilds in Ohio, will speak on grassland management techniques and their application: lessons learned on 10,000 acres of reclaimed land.

A Question and Answer Session with our Panel of Experts will conclude the seminar.

Snacks and lunch will be provided. The cost is \$25, or \$15 for SRAS members.

Special Seneca Rocks May Meeting –

At our May 14 Chapter meeting, Ron Montgomery and Gary Edwards will present a “Warm-up” for the Grassland Seminar, so that our members can have a better understanding of the issues. They plan to review the conference program, define SGL 330, discuss the North American population status of some of the grassland birds found on the various reclaimed surface mines of Clarion County, and possibly discuss some grassland management options.



McKeever Environmental Learning Center

15th Annual Bluebird / Purple Martin Workshop Saturday, March 10, 2007

Bring Back the Eastern Bluebird

Do you enjoy bluebirds? Would you like to know more about them, their habitats, nestlings, nest invaders, predators, and food sources? This workshop will focus on the do's and don'ts of bluebirding. You will learn how to be a good landlord to our feathery friends.

Purple Martins: A Popular Songbird Needs Our Help

This program is to provide the general public with knowledge of the purple martins. Participants will learn the entire life cycle of the purple martins, tips for attracting martins, how to manage a colony site, and ways to deal with common problems.

McKeever is located in Sandy Lake, PA. These programs are free and open to the public. For more info, visit the website at www.mckeever.org, call the center at 724.376.1000 or email: info@mckeever.org.

COOK FOREST STATE PARK PROGRAMS

Cook Forest Half Marathon & 5K will begin at 11:00 a.m. on March 31, 2007. This USA T&F certified half marathon is flat to gently rolling along the beautiful Clarion River. Event is organized and managed by Clarion University Cross Country/Track & Field Team & Timing with Champion Chip by Runner's High. For more information: www.cookforest.com.



The Cook Forest Big Tree Extravaganza will be held on April 21, 2007 from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Contact: Dale J. Luthringer, EES CFSP (814)744-8407. Cook Forest State Park, in conjunction with the Eastern Native Tree Society (ENTS), will

host a series of free events open to the public focusing on old growth forests of Cook Forest and the Eastern United States. We will have more information in the April *Drummer*.

See also: www.nativetreesociety.org.

A Clarion River Sojourn will be held on June 9-10, 2007. Celebrate Pennsylvania's beautiful waterways by joining the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy on the Clarion River Sojourn. Please contact Sarah Zeglin (724)459-0953 ext 110 for more information.

Other upcoming events include a **Cook Forest Scavenger Hunt** on May 12, the **Children's Fishing Derby** on June 3, and the **Cook Forest French & Indian War Encampment** on June 9-10. Contact the State Park at (814)744-8407.



Whip-poor-will by Steven D'Amato

Birdathon 2007

by Janice Horn

Begin thinking about a birding day early in May. Our Birdathon this year is scheduled for Saturday, May 5th, to Sunday, May 13th. Each participant may choose any 24 hour period during those days. Our receipts will go to education projects involving local sites such as Beaver Creek and SGL 330 (Piney Tract/Mt. Zion), Audubon Adventures, and a contribution to Audubon Pennsylvania.

I have supplies that you can use in your Birdathon planning: pledge/contribution forms, post cards for contacting sponsors, report forms, bumper sticker, etc. For those who are regular participants I'll have packets ready for you at the next 2 program meetings. For those who want to join us for the first time please get in touch with me for the materials you'll need.

-Janice Horn (226-7367, jhhorn35@yahoo.com)

Editor's Note – As you may recall, in 2006 SRAS won both contests held by PA Audubon – we had the most species and collected the most funds of any chapter in the state. Let's keep up the good work!

Did you know?

During World War I, parrots were maintained in French forts, where the screeching birds gave warning of approaching German aircraft long before the planes could be detected by human ears.



Map from the BBA website showing Wood Thrush reports to date. White signifies no report in that block. Light shading = possible; medium shading = probable; black = confirmed.

Introduction to the Breeding Bird Atlas

A program by Ron Montgomery

Are you a reluctant Atlasser? Do you think you lack the birding skills or the computer skills to help with the Second PA Breeding Bird Atlas Project? Then this program is for you!

Introduction to the PA Breeding Bird Atlas will be presented by Ron Montgomery in Room 249, Peirce Hall, on Tuesday, March 6 at 6:45 p.m. Ron is presenting to a student group, but the program is free, and the public is more than welcome to attend.

Ron will explain regions, quadrants, and blocks. He will de-mystify Breeding Codes and how they equate to Possible, Probable, or Confirmed. He will explain that species fall into different categories. Asterisked species (regionally rare) and Bold species (special concern or rarity) must have a location and notes to be accepted by the system. The asterisked and bold species are different in each region. For the italicized species (conservation interest), location and notes are encouraged, but not necessary.

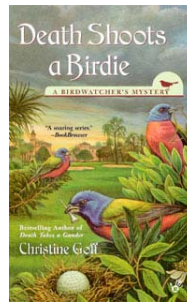
The italicized, asterisked and bold species for each of our local Regions – 30, 31, 43, 44, and 45 – are indicated on the field cards which may be downloaded from our website. Go to

www.senecarocksaudubon.org, scroll down the main page and click on “Breeding Bird Atlas”.

You don’t need computer skills – you don’t even need a computer to help with the Atlas. All of the Regional Coordinators will be glad to print field cards and receive paper reports.

Of a total 4,937 blocks in the state, only 529 have been marked “Complete” as of this writing. We are in the 4th year of the 5 year project, so you can see that a lot of help is needed. All data is important, so birders of all skill levels are encouraged to contribute. For more information: <http://bird.atlasing.org/Atlas/PA>.

DEATH SHOOTS A BIRDIE



At last, the long-awaited 5th book in the Birdwatcher's Mystery series is winging its way to the bookstores! Set to launch March 6th, *DEATH SHOOTS A BIRDIE* finds Rachel Wilder and her friends attending a birding convention on a resort island off the Georgia coast. When a keynote speaker is murdered, Rachel must figure out who killed him before she—or one of her friends—winds up dead. The cast includes some birding and local eccentrics, and the excitement culminates in a wild canoe trip through the Okefenokee swamp with one last chance to save a bird on the edge of extinction.

DEATH SHOOTS A BIRDIE is the fifth in the bestselling Birdwatcher's Mystery series from Berkley Prime Crime. The first two novels in the series—*A RANT OF RAVENS* and *DEATH OF A SONGBIRD*—were finalists for the prestigious Willa Cather Award for Best Original Paperback Fiction, and all of the previous titles found spots on The Denver Post local bestsellers’ lists.



84th Pennsylvania IBA Designated

SRAS members will be happy to know that one of our favorite field trip destinations, Allegheny Front, is now an IBA.

Audubon Pennsylvania announces the designation of the Allegheny Front as Pennsylvania's 84th Important Bird Area (IBA). This new IBA includes part of the Allegheny Front Section of the Appalachian Plateau Province extending from the Pennsylvania-Maryland border north to where Route 322 crosses the Front in Center County, varying in width from one to three miles. The Allegheny Front was approved as an IBA by members of the state Ornithological Technical Committee (OTC), which is comprised of professional biologists from across Pennsylvania who work as college professors, museum curators, private consultants, non-profit conservation organization biologists, and state employees, as well as skilled amateur ornithologists.

The Allegheny Front is recognized as an IBA because it is a critically important corridor for tens of thousands of raptors, songbirds, and other land birds that migrate through Pennsylvania during spring and fall. In addition, the large unbroken tracts of forest provide exceptional habitat and resources for many interior forest bird species that call Pennsylvania home during the breeding/nesting season as well as stopover sites for those passing through in migration. Furthermore, numerous Pennsylvania Species of Conservation Concern and several state and federally listed threatened and endangered species, including Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcons, have been regularly observed throughout the year along areas of the Front.

Important Bird Areas are sites that are part of a global network of places recognized for their outstanding value to birds and bird conservation. The IBA program is a vital initiative designed to help combat threats to bird populations and the habitats we often share with them. The goals of the Pennsylvania IBA program are to identify a network of sites throughout the state that are

essential for sustaining wild bird populations, and to protect or manage these sites for long-term conservation purposes. By focusing attention on the most essential and vulnerable areas, the IBA program helps to promote proactive habitat conservation that ultimately benefits birds, other wildlife, and us.

This article was reprinted from the PSO Pileated with permission.



Can you guess the identity of this SRAS member? Apparently she has always had an affinity for the outdoors.

Biodiesel vs Ethanol ... from the Audubon newswire

Biodiesel is made from raw materials such as soy bean oil, cooking oil waste, animal fats, and rapeseed oil. This alternative fuel can be used by any vehicle that runs on diesel -- no modifications are needed for up to 5% blends. Many diesel engines can utilize a blend of 20% biodiesel and 80% petroleum diesel (B20). Biodiesel can be used in its pure form (B100), but may require engine modifications.

Ethanol is an alcohol-based fuel produced by fermenting and distilling starch crops such as corn, barley, and wheat. When produced from trees and grasses, it is labeled bioethanol. Ethanol can be blended with gasoline to create E85, a

blend of 85% ethanol and 15% gasoline. E-85 can be used by flexible fuel vehicles (FFV), which are able to accept a variety of fuel types.

Both biodiesel and ethanol are becoming available from an increasing number of suppliers and are less toxic and more biodegradable than conventional fuel. Ethanol has a lower energy (BTU) output than gasoline. It takes about 1.5 gallons of ethanol to deliver the same mileage as 1 gallon of gasoline. However, according to a recent National Academy of Sciences study, ethanol production is more efficient than biodiesel, with approximately 420 gallons of ethanol produced per acre of corn versus 60 gallons of biodiesel generated per acre of soybeans. Still another factor found by the study was that ethanol reduces greenhouse gas emissions by 12 % compared with fossil fuels, whereas biodiesel reduces emissions 41 %.

There is not one clear cut answer as to which fuel alternative is best. What is clear is that a variety of options must be explored.

Springtails

-- The following is an excerpt from *Gone for the Day* by Ned Smith.

March 12: If I saw one "snow flea" today I saw several million. They decorated the snow singly and in patches like animated poppy seeds poured at random all over the mountainside.

More properly known as springtails, the 1/16-inch long insects emerge from the leaf mold on warm winter and early spring days. They crawl about hesitantly, casting about with flailing antennae as though fearful of getting lost, but periodically they tuck their forked "tails" beneath them and spring into the air with startling abruptness. It is doubtful that even a springtail knows where he will land. Roadside ditches become coated with their tightly packed bodies like beds of slaty sediment... I've seen them in such abundance after the snows have melted that their launchings and landings in the dry leaves made an audible whispering sound.



Sandhill Crane Migration

Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary in Nebraska invites everyone to witness this spectacle

Kearney, NE, - Each spring over a half-million Sandhill Cranes congregate on Nebraska's Platte River in one of the world's greatest migration spectacles. Along with these majestic birds, thousands of birdwatchers flock to Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary near Kearney to see and hear this astounding migration display.

In conjunction with the Sandhill Crane migration, the 37th annual Rivers and Wildlife Celebration, presented by Audubon Nebraska, Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary, and the Nebraska Partnership for All-Bird Conservation, will be held March 16-18, 2007, in Kearney, NE.

Featured presenters this year include: Bruce Babbitt, John Acorn, Scott Hereford, and Dr. Paul Johnsgard. For more information, see: www.Nebraska.audubon.org.

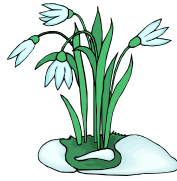


Oil Region Birding Festival

The Oil Region Alliance will be sponsoring a Birding Festival on Thursday through Saturday, May 10-12, in Venango County, geared to beginning and intermediate birders. Julie Zickefoose, bird artist and author, will be the keynote speaker on Friday evening at Cross Creek Resort. Many of us are familiar with Ms. Zickefoose's artwork, as she did the cover painting for the *Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania*, as well as some of the sketches in the species accounts.

Some Upcoming Activities

Conneaut Marsh Outing - March 31
Presque Isle - April 7
National Wildlife Week - April 26-28
Buzzard Swamp Outing - April 28
Oil Creek Warbler Walk - May 5
Birdathon - May 5 thru 13
Oil Region Birding Festival - May 10 - 12
PSO meeting in Harrisburg - May 18-20
Piney Tract Outing - May 26
Grassland Seminar - June 1
Atlas Blockbusting - dates in June and July



SRAS Board Members

<u>Deb Freed</u> , President, Membership	226-4719
<u>Gary Edwards</u> , Vice-president, Programs	676-3011
<u>Dennis Beaver</u> , Secretary/Publicity	676-6564
<u>Janice Horn</u> , Treasurer, Birdseed, Birdathon	226-7367
<u>Flo McGuire</u> , Website, Drummer Editor	755-3672
<u>Jim Wilson</u> , Events, Field Trips	676-5455
<u>Ron Montgomery</u> , Community Programs	764-6088
<u>Paulette Colantonio</u> , Education	797-2031
<u>Pat Conway</u> , History	849-6315
<u>Margaret Buckwalter</u> , Mill Creek Coalition	782-3925
<u>Walter Fye</u> , Beaver Creek	797-1019



Hosts for Upcoming Meetings:

March 12 - **Ruth & Karl Schurr**
April 9 - **Carol Riffer & Joan Magistrella**
May 14 - **Carl & Joan Rowe**

Join the growing e-Drummer subscribers
and get your Drummer on-line,
earlier than the mailed copy, and in Color!

Send your e-mail address to :

dfreed208@adelphia.net

Seneca Rocks Audubon Society
P.O. Box 148
Clarton, PA 16214