



THE DRUMMER

www.senecarocksaudubon.org



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Setting the Stage for Coastal Wetland Conservation: Maryland's Marsh Bird Survey

David Yeany

April 10 Program

During the spring and summer of 2012, the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program (PNHP) coordinated Maryland's portion of the Saltmarsh Habitat and Avian Research Program (SHARP), a two-year survey of tidal marsh birds throughout the northeastern U.S. from Virginia to Maine. Among wetlands worldwide, Atlantic tidal marshes have one of the highest rates of endemic vertebrate species, most of which are birds. With climate change threatening to flood many of these marshes over the next 100 years, the SHARP survey results will help determine population status and geographic distribution for saltmarsh birds across the northeast. This information will be invaluable to conservation planning efforts to protect tidal marshes and the specialized species which depend on them. The SHARP survey targeted secretive marsh bird species like Clapper Rail and Least Bittern as well as saltmarsh obligates like Saltmarsh Sparrow and Seaside Sparrow. While fighting wind, weather, and tides,

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Our programs are held at the
Clarion Free Library. Come early to socialize -
program begins at 6:30 pm.

Cuckoo & Vireo Identification

Ron Montgomery (*Cuckoo*)

Gary Edwards (*Vireo*)

May 8 Program



*Yellow-billed Cuckoo
by Pat Conway*

Last year Gary & Ron suggested a new program idea to the planning committee. Perhaps SRAS members could periodically compare and contrast various similar birds (for example: vireos, woodpeckers, dabbling ducks, accipiters, swallows, etc.) to help us all

become better birders.

The speaker could either

be especially knowledgeable or just have an interest in becoming more knowledgeable about his or her chosen group. Anyone with an interest in providing such a program/discussion could prepare it and then be flexible about when to present it. This approach encourages more member involvement in programs, makes it easier to plan the yearly schedule, and has the added advantage of ensuring readily available back-ups in cases of program cancellations or other issues.

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Coastal Wetland Conservation - David Yeany, continued

we conducted more than 750 surveys and counted thousands of target marsh birds on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay. More information on the SHARP can be found at www.tidmarshbirds.org.

In October 2011, David joined the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program (PNHP) as an ornithologist and conservation planning specialist in the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC) Pittsburgh office. David provides support to numerous conservation planning projects, management of the statewide Natural Heritage Area database, performs GIS analyses, and provides capacity for field ornithology and bird conservation work for PNHP and WPC. His work focuses on collecting, interpreting, and providing ecological information, often utilizing GIS tools, for use in planning at regional, county, and municipal levels, conservation organizations and state agencies. David brings his experience with conservation planning and avian field studies, skills with GIS, and a passion for conserving biodiversity to his position.

Before coming to WPC/PNHP, David was the Important Bird Areas Coordinator for Audubon Maryland-DC. At Audubon, he helped identify critical bird habitats, developed conservation strategies for IBAs, and conducted monitoring for populations of at-risk birds. He has also worked at Fort Indiantown Gap National Guard Training Center in Annville, PA and for the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry, District 8 (Clarion) doing wildlife and habitat inventory and research.

David has an M.S. in Applied Ecology and Conservation Biology from Frostburg State University in Frostburg, MD and a B.S. in Biology from Messiah College in Grantham, PA. He is a native of Forest County and currently lives with his wife, Colleen, just outside Pittsburgh in Cheswick.

Cuckoos & Vireos, continued

Well, now they have been called upon to demonstrate. Our May 8th meeting will be about our local Cuckoos and Vireos. The focus will be on identification but will also include the natural history of the two groups. Ideally both speakers and audience will learn something from the meeting. Please join us for an informative discussion unless you already know all you need to about local cuckoos.



We might spot a Prairie Warbler on this walk.

Oil Creek State Park Warbler Walk Saturday, May 11, 8:00 am

~ Jim Wilson

We meet inside Oil Creek State Park. Go north on Route 8 out of Oil City through Rouseville. The park entrance is on the right about a mile north of Rouseville, immediately after you cross Oil Creek. The park entrance sign is about 32 miles or 50 minutes from the Court House in Clarion. We meet in the Blood Farm day use area parking lot, on the right less than a mile into the park.

Restrooms are available in the day use area and at the park office approximately 3 miles away. Food is available in Oil City and near the Cranberry Mall.

The *Drummer* is the bi-monthly newsletter of Seneca Rocks Audubon Society (SRAS), PO Box 148, Clarion, PA 16214. SRAS is a chapter of the National Audubon Society. The *Drummer* is published 4 times per year— September, November, February, and April. The *Drummer* is available on our website in Adobe pdf and may be read or downloaded from the site – www.senecarocksaudubon.org. Members are encouraged to contribute announcements, articles, photos, etc., to Editor Flo McGuire, 609 Ponderosa Lane, Tionesta, PA 16353 (814 755-3672) or email at fmcguire1@verizon.net.



*Empidonax Flycatcher
(Yellow-bellied)*



Smooth-billed Ani

The Name Game

~ Gary Edwards

About a dozen years ago, I authored a Name Game column to share some insight on various aspects of bird names. Some of the information seems worth repeating periodically, so we'll revive the column by reproducing one of the old ones with a few modifications. Next Fall we'll continue with some old and some new material.

Every so often I need a refresher on pronouncing common bird names. I usually get Blue Jay and American Goldfinch right and have been told often enough that Pileated can be either "PYE-lee-ay-ted" or "PILL-lee-ay-ted" but here are a few that often give me problems. How do you pronounce the following capitalized names? The correct answers, according to The Birdwatcher's Companion by Christopher Leahy (no relation to Michael that I'm aware of), follow the list.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Smooth-Billed ANI | 6. FERRUGINOUS Pygmy Owl |
| 2. Rose-throated BECARD | 7. Common MURRE |
| 3. BOTTERI's Sparrow | 8. PYRRHULOXIA |
| 4. COUES Flycatcher | 9. Common PARAQUE |
| 5. EMPIDONAX Flycatcher | 10. SABINE's Gull |

Answers: Accent the capitalized syllable

1. "AH-nee"
2. "BECK-erd" is the closest to the sound of the French name, but "buh-KARD" is heard with at least equal frequency
3. "BOT-er-ee"
4. "cows"
5. "em-PID-uh-nacks"
6. "feh-ROO-jin-uss"
7. rhymes with "fur" not "cure"
8. "peer-uh-LOCKS-ee-uh"
9. "puh-RAH-kee"
10. Birders frequently say "SAY-byne's" but Sir Edward Sabine pronounced his name "SABB-un"

Ten correct gets you to the top of the class.



We might not have a Bridled Titmouse on our Birdathon, but we'll have fun!

Birdathon

~ Janice Horn

The Birdathon, on the calendar for Saturday, May 4 to Sunday, May 12, 2013, has been our most successful source of funding since Margaret Buckwalter spearheaded it. Back when National Audubon was promoting Birdathons she was thrilled to be present at the national meeting in Estes Park, CO, to receive an award for SRAS for our outstanding participation. The donations raised through your participation in this enjoyable event support our events, educational activities, and membership programs.

The chapter needs your participation and there are two ways you can help:

- being an active birder by spending a day (and night) sighting birds and getting people to make pledges or donations for your efforts,
- donating to one of the people who will be going out. Every "Birdathoner" is anxious to get more pledgers.

I encourage the people who are involved with the Birdathon to take a new birder with them to introduce more people to this fun and profit making activity.

The dates selected include the Migratory Bird Count on Saturday, May 11th. On that day you can go birding with two objectives: count species for the Birdathon and individuals for the

Migratory Bird Count. The first day of the Birdathon is also the day of the Foxburg Naturefest, an ideal day to get a significant variety of species.

If you plan to participate let me know; I will supply you with pledge forms. Also, if you have any questions please contact me. This project provides funds for so much that we do.



August 21 Picnic

~ Deb Freed

The leadership of Seneca Rocks is already planning another year of programming and events for the members. The year begins with the annual picnic. If you purchased a calendar from Seneca Rocks, you'll find the picnic on August 21, below Sandra Budd's photo of the Trumpeter Swan.

We will meet at Shelter 1 along Forest Drive in Cook Forest for a potluck picnic. Come early to bird Tom's Run. Dinner will be at 5:30. Bring your own table service and a dish to pass. SRAS will provide beverages, both hot and cold, as well as grilled hot dogs and hamburgers.

Look for a reminder postcard or e-mail the first week of August. The postcard is our way of updating records and getting the new year started. We encourage families and welcome friends to attend too.

The cure for boredom is curiosity.
There is no cure for curiosity.

~ Dorothy Parker

Down the Shore - March Program Revisited

Sincere thanks and congratulations to Jeff Hall, who stepped in at the last minute to present our March program when Mike found out that he was not able to make it. Jeff's program was titled "Down the Shore". Jeff states: "When New Jerseyans head to the Atlantic Ocean beaches to swim, sunbathe, and walk on the boardwalk, they say they are going "down the shore." When winter comes, the summertime throngs are replaced by cold winds and solitude. But the beach is not abandoned—the nature lover who ventures "down the shore" in this season finds it given over to harlequin ducks, purple sandpipers, snowy owls, and other avian visitors".

These are just a few of the colorful birds in Jeff's program; he saved the day!

Foxburg Naturefest

The weekend of May 4th, the Foxburg Inn will be having their Nature Festival. They will have vendors, exhibitors, and much more! There will be a birdwalk at Riverstone Estate and Allegheny River Bike Trail, an afternoon of photography opportunities, a dinner followed by a presentation on the Golden Eagle, and then an Owl Prowl at Riverstone Estate in the evening. Trish Miller and her husband Mike Lanzone will give the program about their research with Golden Eagles. This is sure to be a fun time. Come celebrate the natural beauty of our area and learn about some of our furry and not-so-furry friends!



Outdoor part of the Winter Tree ID Workshop given February 23 by the District Foresters. ~ Photo by Jim McGuire



*Sandhill Cranes seen on this outing -
photograph by Pat Conway*

Geneva Marsh Outing

This outing on March 23 was a joint outing with Presque Isle Audubon, led by Mike Leahy. The fourteen birders included three from Presque Isle.

Pat Conway supplied the following species list: American Black Duck, American Coot, American Crow, American Kestrel, American Robin, American Wigeon, Bald Eagle, Blue Jay, Bufflehead, Canada Goose, Common Goldeneye, Common Grackle, Common Merganser, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Bluebird, European Starling, Gadwall, Greater Scaup, Greater Yellowlegs, Green-winged Teal, Herring Gull, Hooded Merganser, Horned Grebe, Killdeer, Lesser Scaup, Lesser Yellowlegs, Long-tailed Duck, Mallard, Mourning Dove, Northern Cardinal, Northern Harrier, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Red-breasted Merganser, Redhead, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-winged Blackbird, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Pigeon, Rough-legged Hawk, Ruddy Duck, Rusty Blackbird, Sandhill Crane, Snow Goose, Tree Swallow, Tundra Swan, Turkey Vulture, and Wood Duck.

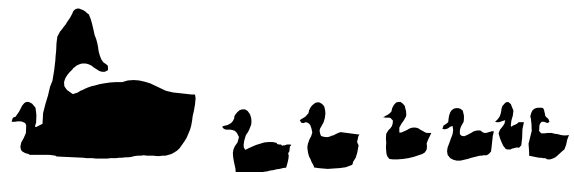




Photo by Pat Conway

A Red-headed Woodpecker Adventure by Pat Conway

About a month ago around two o'clock in the afternoon, the telephone rang.

I answered it. "Hey, Mom, this is Ellie." (My daughter) She was whispering.

"Emmy (my granddaughter) and I are at the park. You'll never guess what I'm looking at."

"A Red-headed woodpecker?" I guessed.

"Yes, and there are two of them." She whispered.

"Cool." I said.

"They're in a tree by the playground," she whispered again.

"I wish you could see them."

"Me too."

"This is a new park, Mom. We've never been here before. I was just sitting here watching Emmy on the slide and I heard them pecking. They're so beautiful!

And so...the adventure began.

I didn't think I would be seeing my daughter again until Thanksgiving, but I was happy when a good friend asked if I would like to ride down to North Carolina with her as she was visiting her son and his family. My daughter, it so happens, lives three hours from her son.

We planned our trip and off we went with presents for the grandkids, binoculars, and field guides in tow. I also took my camera and tripod. (Just in case I might get a chance to photograph the red-headed woodpeckers).

Our trip south went fast as we traveled through Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina and into South Carolina, where my daughter and granddaughter met us just north of Charlotte.

My first day in South Carolina, I realized that I hadn't brought the appropriate clothes. On previous visits, I had nearly passed out from heat exhaustion. This time, however, it was cold, windy and cloudy, even though the buds were coming out on the trees.

I was reluctant to even mention to my daughter that I would like to try and get some pictures of the red-headed woodpeckers she had seen, because of the cold weather, but on the third day of my visit, she cheerily said, "Mom, would you like to go to the park today and see if we can find the woodpeckers?" I was in the car in five minutes. It took about fifteen minutes to drive to the park.

Ellie and I had discussed the decline of the red-headed woodpecker in Pennsylvania on several occasions. She knew how much I wanted to see one. Once common here, they began their decline in the early 1930s. Their decline was attributed to the automobile and European starlings. Automobiles struck and killed the birds as they flew down to pick up insects on the roadways and they had to compete with the European starling for nest sites.

At the park, we let Emma play on the swings and slide. I walked around looking up at the trees, wishing I had brought a warmer jacket, camera in hand.

We weren't there long when Ellie waved to me and hollered, "Mom, I see one!" She pointed to a large tree across the playground.

"I see it!" I said.

Right about then, the wind picked up and I ran back to the car to grab my down vest, which I had packed at home at the last minute, never dreaming I would need it.

That woodpecker, I must say, was very cooperative. He flew from branch to branch in a particular tree, affording me many photo ops. I was so cold, however, that I couldn't hold the camera still, my fingers were frozen and all my pictures were fuzzy.

Finally, noting my frustration, Ellie said to me, "Mom, do you want to steady the camera on my shoulder?" Here teeth were chattering.

"Okay." I said, "Let's try that."

It was soon obvious that this wasn't working either and I was getting frustrated.

That's when the thought occurred to me that maybe I should get the tripod out of the car and use that. Duh!

From experience I know that it doesn't happen often that a bird will actually stay and let you take its picture, but it happened that day. Upon examining the pictures that did turn out, I think I figured out why. To the right of the best picture is a large hole. Since we didn't see a second bird on my visit, I believe the female was in that hole, incubating eggs.

I could be completely wrong, but I know that the male had a particular interest in that area of the tree, even reclining near the hole.

I'm home now, but Ellie will go back to check on the red-headed woodpeckers in a couple of weeks. I'll let you know how it turns out.

PSO Annual Meeting

The 23rd Annual Meeting of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology will be held May 31 - June 2, 2013 at the Quality Inn and Suites Conference Center, Wilkes-Barre, PA.

This will be a birdy weekend, including a Friday evening get-together, Saturday and Sunday morning field trips, vendors, Saturday afternoon presentations by researchers, a silent auction, and a banquet on Saturday evening with award presentations. Non-members are welcome.

See the PSO website, www.pabirds.org, for a registration form.

Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania

Copies of the award-winning Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania, which has been described as the best example of a breeding bird atlas anywhere in the world, are still available from Penn State University Press at www.psupress.org/books/titles/978-0-271-05630-2.html. PSO members may use the 20% discount code, SOC-12, during check-out at PSUP while it is still available.

Some Interesting Blogs & Websites

www.nemesisbird.com - A lively blog by a group of young birders from Pennsylvania.

<http://juliezickefoose.blogspot.com> - A blog by writer, artist, naturalist Julie Zickefoose.

<http://www.sibleyguides.com> - This blog by David Sibley goes above and beyond the Sibley guides. All you ever wanted to know about bird identification. (e.g., "my trick to finding Rusty Blackbirds")

www.littlebirdiehome.com - Birding news and birdcams from around the country and world.

www.natureinstruct.org - Photos and calls of all North American birds.

<http://www.allaboutbirds.org> - The Cornell site of bird info, photos and songs.

Upcoming Dates & Events

April 10 Program - Coastal Wetland
Conservation

May 4 - Foxburg Naturefest

May 4 - May 12 - (choose a day) Birdathon

May 8 Program - Cuckoo & Vireo Id

May 11 - Warbler Walk at Oil Creek State Park

May 11 - PA Migration Count

*The shore is an ancient world, for as long as there
has been an earth and sea there has been this place
of the meeting of land and water. Yet it is a world
that keeps alive the sense of continuing creation
and of the relentless drive of life. Each time that I
enter it, I gain some new awareness of its beauty
and its deeper meanings, sensing that intricate
fabric of life by which one creature is linked with
another, and each with its surroundings.*

~ Rachel Carson



*Bloodroot photo taken 3/22/2012,
when it was spring.*

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