Next Meeting – February 12
Room 150, Becker Hall
Social – 6:30 p.m. Program begins at 7:00 p.m.

RAPTORS & HUMMINGBIRDS
by Gary Edwards

Our February 12 meeting will feature a PowerPoint presentation by avid birder and nature photographer Dr. Don Bryant, Professor of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology at The Penn State University. Over the last two years, Don has traveled to Panama, Washington state, and Montana (4 times) to photograph migrating western hawks. Join us and learn how to age Bald Eagles and to enjoy his photos of Swainson’s, Ferruginous, western Red-Tailed, Harlan’s, and Rough-Legged Hawks plus two Gyrfalcons. As a bonus, we’ll see ten different Panamanian hummingbirds and other odds-and-ends. Bring a friend and welcome Don to our little corner of the world.

Mid-winter Bird Seed Sale!
See our order form on page 5

Clarion Christmas Bird Count
December 30, 2006
by Ruth Schurr

The Christmas Bird Count was started on Christmas Day, 1900, as a way of promoting conservation by counting, rather than hunting, birds. We now have 106 years of population data from thousands of individual counts. Our CBC this year yielded 50 species, less than the 57 we tallied in 2005. We had a warm, sunny day, great to be in the field, but maybe not so good for birding.

Altogether, 7619 birds were seen or heard by the 47 participants. The count includes 12 sets of feeder-watchers.

The list of birds is as follows:
Canada Goose -605, Mallard -23, Common Merganser -1, Ring-necked Pheasant -5, Ruffed Grouse -6, Wild Turkey -58, Great Blue Heron -2, Northern Harrier -7, Sharp-shinned Hawk -1, Cooper's Hawk -5, Northern Goshawk -1, Red-tailed Hawk -69, American Kestrel -19, Rock Pileated Woodpecker
by Steven D'Amato

Comparing the data to our previous CBC, there were actually 5 species reported this year that weren’t found last year: Common Merganser, Great Blue Heron, Northern Goshawk, Common Raven, and Common Grackle. Twelve species’ numbers increased significantly, while ten species decreased. Notable were the Purple Finch, down from 106 last year to 10 this year, and White-throated Sparrow, down from 162 to 5 this year.

We had a good turnout that Saturday. Those counting were: Ernie Aharrah, Art Barlow, Ken Behrens, Bonnie Black, Ron Black, Hendrika Bohlen, Margaret Buckwalter, Pat Conway, Pete Dalby, Eric Dowlan, Gary Edwards, Mary Emerick, Gary Frank, Margaret Frank, Deb Freed, Walter Fye, Layne Giering, Harry & Jeanne Hakanson, Bob Hays, Edith Hays, Sally Hochman, Janice Horn, Anne Hunt, Rheba Klinger, Bill Kodrich, Henrietta Kodrich, Charles Marlin, Flo & Jim McGuire, Shirley Monrean, Ron Montgomery, Evelyn Myers, John & Kathy Pokrifka, Bill Reddinger, Joan & Carl Rowe, Melissa Sack, Ruth Schurr, Karl Schurr, Gil Twiest, Carole Willenpart, Richard Willenpart, Jack Williams, Fran Williams, and Margo Wimer.

As we do every year, the group met for a delicious supper at BJ’s Eatery in Knox, where we compared notes and tallied the birds. This year what we didn’t see may be partly a factor of the warm weather. It will be interesting to see the data from other areas in the CBC report that will be sent to us later. Or to check the internet site to see all the results.


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**The Drumming Log**

**Waiting for winter**

by President Deb Freed

The picture of my window feeder with a bird may not seem that unusual except for the fact that the feeder was hung in September 2006 and this bird was the first to use it!

Last August I visited my sister in Columbus, Ohio, where I watched a procession of birds for one hour fly from tree, to deck railing to her window feeder. It was so entertaining that I purchased one at the local bird store. Shortly after returning home, I washed the window, filled the feeder with premium no hull feed and mounted with those substantial suction cups. I watched and waited, watched and...
waited... well; you already know the end of my story. Four months later, almost to the day, I was sitting at the kitchen table eating lunch and this Tree Sparrow landed, picked a few small seeds then flew to the protection of the nearby shrubs. It really took the snowfall to bring birds of any number and variety to my feeders this year. I have had a steady population of Juncos and not much else. My first 50-pound bag of sunflower seeds from the fall birdseed sale lasted until January. I have really missed the usual activity in the yard, just as I missed so many species at the Christmas Bird Count. This quiet winter has eerily made me think of Rachael Carson's *Silent Spring*. With the return of seasonal temperatures, the birds are coming back to the feeders and the Great Backyard Bird Count in February looks a little more promising. The frozen ground means no more muddy paws after my daily walks with the dogs and the snow is beginning to form a base for some cross-country skiing. Welcome back winter.

**“Half-hardy” winter species**

Greg Grove, the winter season editor for *Pennsylvania Birds*, is especially interested in “half-hardy” winter species occurring from January 5 through February 28. These include: Wilson's snipe, eastern phoebe, blue-headed vireo, house wren, winter wren, ruby-crowned kinglet, hermit thrush, gray catbird, brown thrasher, yellow-rumped warbler, pine warbler, common yellowthroat, eastern towhee, field sparrow, fox sparrow, and eastern meadowlark. Greg notes that he is obviously also interested in other warblers, winter finches, snow bunting, longspurs, shrikes.

Please notify your county compiler if you see any of these species.

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*This morning when I stood on the river bank, the sun was making all golden the edge of the clouds in the west. There was a blue sky above Shumo, but snowflakes were blown thick and fast from the canyon until they hid the mesas. As they shut out the world and made for me a hushed place in their midst, I was very near the source of things.*

–by Edith Warner

from *Sisters of the Earth*, second edition

---

**Spotting Scope and Tripod - Silent Auction**

There will be a silent auction for the spotting scope and tripod that Seneca Rocks was awarded for the chapter’s first place in the 2006 Birdathon. The minimum bid will be $100 to be paid in cash or check made payable to SRAS.

**Specs:** Eagle Optics Raven Spotting Scope with protective cover

- Objective lens: 78 mm, fully multi-coated, air-spaced doublet
- Focusing range: 17’ – infinity
- Focal length: 420 mm
- Length: 14.25 inches
- Height: 3.5 inches
- Diameter: 3.4 inches
- Weight: 48 ounces
- Magnification: 20-60x
- Exit Pupil: 3.9 – 1.3 mm
- Field of view: 95’-53’/1000 yds
- Weight: 4.8oz

Lifetime Warranty from Eagle Optics

Radian Pro GT Tripod with Pan & Vertical tilt handle

- Tall, sturdy, lightweight
- Cushioned legs
- Locking quick release head
- Quick release legs
- Spirit levels
- Leg diameter: 22 mm
- Max extension: 64”
- Folded length: 24”
- Unit weight: 5.5 lbs
- Travel case & tool for re-tightening cams

SRAS is planning a Grassland Seminar

On Friday, June 1,

at the Health-Science Center in Clarion.
COOK FOREST STATE PARK PROGRAMS

Saturday, February 17 from 11:00am-3:00pm - ‘Snowman in the Forest Day’

Come join us for a day of fun wintry activities along the picturesque National Wild & Scenic Clarion River within Cook Forest State Park. Various activities will be held at the Ice Skating Pond, along River Road approximately 1-mile upriver from the Park Office:

11:30am-2:30pm - Antlered reindeer pulled wagon rides.
11:30am-12:30pm - Snowshoe interpretive hike within the old growth forest along Cook Trail.
1:30pm-2:30pm - Snowshoe interpretive hike within the old growth forest along Cook Trail.

It will be a wonderful day for the family to enjoy ice skating, sled riding, and a snowman building contest (pray for snow).

Come sample the chili during the ‘Free Chili Cook-OFF’, that is, after the judges have tried some first (please e-mail info@cookforest.org to sign-up). Hot chocolate, coffee, fire, and a warming hut will be on hand to help take the “chill” out of your bones.

Enjoy a wonderful day among family and friends in Cooksburg’s winter wonderland.
For more information – cookforestsp@state.pa.us or (814)744-8475

Coming up - The Cook Forest Big Tree Extravaganza on April 21, 2007.

Wind Farms and Eagles
by Dennis Beaver

A study is being conducted by the National Aviary in Pittsburgh and the Powderrmill Avian Research Center in Westmoreland County, because some researchers say that golden eagles do not know how to react to windmills, and tend to fly into the blades and be killed. There is a special concern about wind farms.

According to the Erie Times-News, Pennsylvania leads the eastern United States in wind energy production. The state Department of Environmental Protection reports that Pennsylvania wind farms produce 153 megawatts annually, which is enough to power 100,000 homes. The Department of Environmental Protection is the agency that issues permits for wind turbines. Tom Rathburn, a spokesman for the DEP states, “I think everyone involved in the process – regulatory agencies, environmental groups and the wind power industry – all agree that further data is needed to determine if wind turbines do indeed present a danger to wildlife.”

Todd Katzner, who is the director of conservation and field research at the National Aviary, told the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, “Wind power is an important issue. My feeling is that there are ways to do it right and ways to do it wrong, and our goal is to provide information about how to do it right.”

The researchers are currently tracking two golden eagles with solar-powered devices strapped to their backs as they migrate through the Appalachian Mountains twice each year. The three-ounce devices send information by satellite, so researchers know where the birds are and how fast and how high they are flying. They plan to track more birds in the future.

This is probably an issue about which we will all want to become better informed, as the results of this preliminary research become available.

Editor’s Note: You can actually track these eagles, which were released at the Allegheny Front Hawkwatch, at this website: http://www.aviary.org/csrv/eaglePA.php
**SRAS Bird Seed Sale**
This is your opportunity to purchase quality bird seed from our local Agway dealer and support the conservation, education and environmental activities of the Seneca Rocks Audubon Society. For your convenience, you will have a one week period to pick up your order by checking the SRAS order in the store. If there is any question about your order, please contact Janice Horn.

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Mail this order form with check (payable to SRAS) to: Seneca Rocks Audubon Society
c/o Janice Horn
32 Barber St.
Clarion, PA 16214

Name_________________________________________ Phone ____________________________
Address____________________________________________________ SRAS member Y___ N___
City________________________________ State_______ Zip________________

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Make checks payable to: Seneca Rocks Audubon Society

Subtotal __________ 6% tax __________
Donation to Seneca Rocks Audubon __________
Total __________
John James Audubon
A Book Review

In the early 1800’s John James Audubon had settled in Louisville, Kentucky, where he became friends with William Croghan, an Irish-born former major in Washington’s army who had known Audubon’s father in the war. At the age of 23, Audubon had become interested in field observation, so he went to see Croghan’s remarkable sycamore tree, which provided housing for a huge colony of chimney swifts. Audubon hired a woodcutter to create an opening in the base of the huge tree, so he could investigate the contents. Under the cover of night, Audubon used a dark lantern – one which had doors that could be closed to hide its light – to sneak into the tree. Audubon subsequently concluded that there were 9,000 swifts roosting in Croghan’s magnificent sycamore tree. He collected specimens, and on July 27, he set one up on his wire grid and drew it.

Richard Rhodes, a Pulitzer Prize winner, goes inside the life and times of John James Audubon, who before coming to the United States was known as Jean-Jaques Fougère Audubon, who was born in St. Dominique as Jean Rabin, the bastard son of Jean Audubon and Jeanne Rabin. He was reared as the legitimate son of Jean Audubon, by Jean Audubon’s wife Anne Moynet. This was a rather inauspicious beginning for one who would so greatly impact the world of birds. Metaphorically, like Audubon creeping inside the huge sycamore tree, Rhodes creeps inside the life of John James Audubon to present both the life of the man, and the times in which he lived. Rhodes seamlessly inserts a few paragraphs which put each stage of the life of Audubon into historical perspective. By the time the reader is a fourth of the way through the book, he or she are insiders to the life of Audubon.

If you are a person who is interested in birds, you will want to read *John James Audubon, the Making of an American*, by Richard Rhodes, Vintage Books, New York, New York, 2006, Vintage ISBN-10:0-375-71393-X and Vintage ISBN-13: 798-0-375-71393-4. This is more than a biography. It is a history of a man, carefully set in the circumstances in which he lived. You feel yourself moving with Audubon into the heartland, always searching, always working to perfect his skills of observance and recording. You may even find yourself picking up a sketch pad and pencil to record what you are seeing, much as Audubon worked at developing his skills as an artist. Perhaps you are using a digital camera?

--The Old Curmudgeon

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent. Anyone can participate, from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes. It’s free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds.

Participants count birds anywhere for as little or as long as they wish during the four-day period. They tally the highest number of birds of each species seen together at any one time. To report their counts, they fill out an online checklist at the Great Backyard Bird Count web site.

As the count progresses, anyone with Internet access can explore what is being reported from their own towns or anywhere in the United States and Canada. They can also see how this year's numbers compare with those from previous years. Participants may also send in photographs of the birds they see. A selection of images is posted in the online photo gallery.
In 2006, participants reported a record-breaking 7.5 million birds of 623 species. They submitted 60,616 checklists, just 433 shy of an all-time record for total checklists.

**Why Count Birds?**

Scientists and bird enthusiasts can learn a lot by knowing where the birds are. Bird populations are dynamic; they are constantly in flux. No single scientist or team of scientists could hope to document the complex distribution and movements of so many species in such a short time. It doesn't matter whether you report the 5 species coming to your backyard feeder or the 75 species you see during a day's outing to a wildlife refuge.

Your counts can help us answer many questions:

- How will this winter's snow and cold temperatures influence bird populations?
- Where are winter finches and other “irruptive” species that appear in large numbers during some years but not others?
- How will the timing of birds’ migrations compare with past years?
- How are bird diseases, such as West Nile virus, affecting birds in different regions?
- What kinds of differences in bird diversity are apparent in cities versus suburban, rural, and natural areas?
- Are any birds undergoing worrisome declines that point to the need for conservation attention?

Scientists use the counts, along with observations from other citizen-science projects, such as the Christmas Bird Count, Project FeederWatch, and eBird, to give us an immense picture of our winter birds. Each year that these data are collected makes them more meaningful and allows scientists to investigate far-reaching questions.

For highlights of past results, visit the Science Stories section of the GBBC web site, [http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/)

The Great Backyard Bird Count is led by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, with sponsorship from Wild Birds Unlimited.

**A New Pennsylvania Field Guide**

The new *National Geographic Field Guide to Birds: Pennsylvania* (272 pages, published in 2006, $14.95) is a compact guide to more than 125 of Pennsylvania’s easiest to see birds. It includes large photographs of all featured species plus some smaller illustrations of similar species, different plumages or morphs, or the opposite sex. Identification information and range maps are on the page opposite the photographs, making it very easy to use. Jonathan Alderfer is the editor. Pittsburgh’s own Paul Hess is the expert who provided the map information and much of the text.

Although limited in scope, the guide often includes more data on a given species than a standard field guide. This extra information is frequently found in the "Behavior" or “Field Notes” sections. Thus we learn that the Brown Creeper may press its body against the trunk of a tree when a predator is near, becoming almost invisible. Or that Bank Swallows beat their wings faster than Northern Rough-winged Swallows near their nesting tunnels. Or that a Veery may fly more than 160 miles in one night.

The “Local Sites” section is another aspect of the guide not usually found in standard guides.

The *National Geographic Field Guide to Birds: Pennsylvania* is an excellent guide for beginners as well as for more experienced observers who are interested in learning additional facts about behavior. Even though I have many other field guides, the extra information in this one has made it a welcome addition to my library.

- Evelyn Fowles

- This review was reprinted from the Todd Bird Club Newsletter with permission.

**McKeever Environmental Learning Center**

in Sandy Lake, PA, will be holding its 15th Annual *Bluebird / Purple Martin Workshop* on Saturday, March 10, 2007

For more info, see [http://www.mckeever.org](http://www.mckeever.org)
**Operation Backyard Recovery**  
… from the Audubon newswire

The National Audubon Society and The National Arbor Day Foundation held their latest Katrina Tree Recovery Campaign tree giveaway event in November, with nearly 22,000 trees given away by volunteers at 19 distribution sites across coastal Mississippi and southeastern Louisiana. The campaign is now approaching 45,000 native trees delivered in 2006 to help the people and communities of the Gulf Coast restore the beautiful trees lost to Hurricane Katrina.

Audubon Mississippi’s collaboration with The National Arbor Day Foundation is part of its overall initiative, dubbed *Operation Backyard Recovery*, to promote the recovery of habitat for birds and other wildlife in areas stricken by Hurricane Katrina. More information can be found at [http://www.msaudubon.org/](http://www.msaudubon.org/).

**New Clarion County Compiler**

Most of you have been sending your bird sightings to Margaret Buckwalter over the years for inclusion in the PSO quarterly journal, *Pennsylvania Birds*. We are very grateful to Margaret, who consistently organized the data and filed interesting reports (even pre-computer and pre-internet!). We are doing backflips to have found a wonderful replacement so that Margaret can retire. Carole Willenpart, who is also a very good birder and familiar with Clarion county bird populations, will be the new compiler. Please send your sightings to Carole at rwillenpart@windstream.net, or 159 Moggey Rd, Sligo, PA 16255, or (814) 745-3818.

**Introducing Sara Sargent**  
by Dennis Beaver

Sara is an employee of Audubon Pennsylvania, and will be working out of the French Creek Project in Meadville. She has a Ph.D. in ecology and evolutionary biology. Her position is a new one with responsibilities that include general monitoring of the northwestern region’s 22 designated Important Bird Areas, helping with the development and implementation of conservation plans for the IBA’s and ensuring their continued ecological integrity and building public support.

In the 1980’s BirdLife International launched the IBA program to help reverse the decline in bird populations. Important Bird Area is a designation given to sites of significant importance to bird conservation. They include sites with exceptional concentrations or diversity of bird life; sites with significant populations of rare, threatened or endangered species; sites where there is a record of long-term and ongoing monitoring and research; and sites with rare or unique habitats and bird populations consistent with those habitats.

In an *Erie Times-News* article (Sunday, January 21, 2007), Susan Smith, a member of the Presque Isle Audubon Chapter Board said that Sara Sargent will be particularly valuable in developing the volunteer “citizen scientist” monitoring important to gauging avian population trends, and habitat needs. Sargent said that her immediate goals include developing a cadre of volunteer monitors and providing assistance to land managers. “We want to do whatever can be done to promote bird populations,” she said.

John Hartman, Audubon Pennsylvania’s communications coordinator, in the same *Erie Times-News* article stated that Audubon Pennsylvania established the first coordinated statewide IBA program in the nation. There are three IBA’s In Erie County, and five IBA’s in Crawford County. Seneca Rocks Audubon Society looks forward to working with Sara Sargent.

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**Audubon Announces New Online Apparel Store** - The new online Audubon Apparel and Gear Store is open for business. Visit [http://audubon.usptgear.com/](http://audubon.usptgear.com/) to purchase a broad selection of merchandise featuring the Audubon logo. A portion of each purchase supports Audubon's programs and activities.
Skye’s Spirit Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Center

"The language of animals is very ancient, and, like other ancient modes of speech, very elliptical: little is said, but much is meant and understood".

- Gilbert White

Skye’s Spirit Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Center (SSWREC) is a non-profit 501c3 organization located near Harrisville, Pa. We care for 700+- injured and orphaned wild birds, mammals, and reptiles every year. Our mission is to provide them with the care they need and release them into the wild for a second chance. We also provide educational programs to schools and other groups with permanently injured, non-releasable birds of prey.

We are State and Federally licensed, but rely solely on donations from the public to help with funding.

The center has been open for seven years, and is in much need of repairs. We are also going to build a permanent on site education center where children and adults can come learn about Pennsylvania wildlife and conservation issues.

For more information, see http://www.skyes-spirit.com or contact volunteer Jessica Hartwick at (724) 355-7250 or by email at jessi@skyes-spirit.com. If you are interested in donating some time, supplies, or money, please see the following suggestions. Thank you.

WISH LIST

- Monetary Donations
- Sponsorships
- Food Supplies (e.g., bird seed, dry dog food, canned cat food, grocery gift cards)
- Building Supplies
- Artificial Turf, Grass Carpeting
- Cleaning Supplies (e.g., Simple Green, Dawn, paper towels, buckets, bleach)
- Landscaping Supplies
- Builders, Volunteers, and Tree Planters

-- condensed from an email from Jessica Hartwick

Houseplants & Indoor Air

…from the Audubon newswire

Former NASA researcher Dr. Bill Wolverton examined the effects of houseplants on indoor air quality. He determined that indoor plants can absorb airborne chemicals commonly found in homes and offices. About two or three plants for every 20-25 square feet of space should suffice. (Editor’s note – Let me do the math. For a modest 5 room, 1,000 square foot house, that would mean 80 to 150 plants, or 16 to 30 plants in each room! Maybe what we can learn is that if you have a few houseplants, it will improve the air quality somewhat.)

The sources of indoor air pollution are varied. Some airborne toxins come from new carpets, shower curtains, furniture or dry cleaning that can release microscopic particles into the air. These volatile organic chemicals (VOCs) degrade the air quality, and continue to do so even after the new product smell has dissipated. VOCs can irritate the respiratory tract -- causing headaches, sinus congestion, and fatigue as well as other health problems. Purchasing green or organic products whenever possible is another way to optimize indoor air quality.

According to the NASA study, some of the plants which are most beneficial to indoor air are Reed palm, dwarf date palm, Boston fern, Janet Craig dracaena, English ivy, Australian sword fern, peace lily, rubber plant and weeping fig. Other especially good ones are dieffenbachia, philodendron, spider plant, poinsettia, gerbera daisy, and chrysanthemeum.

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Some Upcoming Activities

- Bird Seed Sale – order by February 12
- Winter Raptor Survey – thru Feb. 1
- Conneaut Marsh Outing – March 31
- Presque Isle – April 7
- Birdathon – May 5 thru 13
- PSO meeting in Harrisburg – May 18-20
- Piney Tract outing – May 26
- Grassland Seminar – June 1

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

Hosts for Upcoming Meetings:

Feb. 12 – Hendrika Bohlen & Mary Emerick
Mar. 12 – Ruth & Karl Schurr

SRAS Board Members

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<td>President, Membership</td>
<td>226-4719</td>
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<td>Gary Edwards</td>
<td>Vice-president, Programs</td>
<td>676-3011</td>
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<td>Dennis Beaver</td>
<td>Secretary/Publicity</td>
<td>676-6564</td>
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<td>Treasurer,Birdseed,Birdathon</td>
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<td>Flo McGuire</td>
<td>Website, Drummer Editor</td>
<td>755-3672</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Buckwalter</td>
<td>Mill Creek Coalition</td>
<td>782-3925</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walter Fye</td>
<td>Beaver Creek</td>
<td>797-1019</td>
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Chardon, PA 16214
P.O. Box 148
Seneca Rocks Audubon Society