



THE DRUMMER

www.senecarocksaudubon.org



April/May 2012

Volume 28, No. 4



Little Brown Bat - Thanks to artist Danny Woodard and SherpaGuides.com for use of the sketch.

Bats: My Favorite Flying Animal!

April 11 Program by Pam Stoleson

Pam Stoleson is a native New Mexican, now living in northwestern Pennsylvania. During her college years in New Mexico, her favorite professor took his classes into the wilds of southwestern New Mexico for research experiences from desert grasslands to mountain slopes. One of his primary loves was bats, so Pam had the opportunity to see many different species up close. Along with reptiles, bats remain one of her favorite groups of animals.

She will talk about the biology of this very interesting organism, along with an introduction to bat species of Pennsylvania.

Don't miss this program - you will find it entertaining as well as informative.

Our programs are held on the second Wednesday of each month at the Clarion Free Library. Come early to socialize - the program begins at 6:30 pm.

Members' Night

May 9 Program

Members' Night is your chance to show your own photos, tell your own stories, perhaps bring an item for Show and Tell. We may have some discussion about chapter activities and plans for the future. We have a diverse and active membership, and this evening is always a lot of fun.

Field Trips

March 31 - Conneaut Lake Marsh - Joint Outing with Presque Isle Audubon. This is your chance to see eagles near their nests and migrating waterfowl on the swamps, marshes, ponds and Pymatuning Lake area.

Meet at the Meadville McDonald's parking lot on Rt. 322 just west of I-79 at 8:30 am. (Exit from I-79 onto Rt. 6/322 west and drive about a mile. McDonald's is on the right, at the top of the hill). From there we will explore some of Crawford County's best wetlands for Eagles and waterfowl. This trip will last until mid-afternoon. Most birding will be a short walk from our vehicles. In the past we have had more than 25 Bald Eagles and 15 or more species of waterfowl. Please bring a field guide, binoculars and a camera or scope if you have one. Also, dress warmly and in layers and pack a lunch. Some carpooling may be done from the meeting spot. Trip coordinator Chuck Gehringer 814 490-4748.

Field Trips, Continued

April 21, Presque Isle State Park. Meet at Vista One Parking Lot, the first obvious place to scope Presque Isle Bay at 9:00 am.

From Clarion, take Rt. 322 West to I-79; take I-79 North until it ends at Rt. 20; take Rt. 20 West to Rt. 832 North, which becomes Peninsula Drive and leads into the park. It is usually windy and the weather can change quickly, so dressing in layers would be a good idea here also.

May 12, Oil Creek State Park Warbler Walk.

Meet at the Blood Farm day use area at 8:30 am. Oil Creek State Park is about 32 miles from Clarion. Take Rt. 8 North from Oil City; the park entrance is on the right about a mile north of Rouseville. The meeting place is less than a mile into the park. This is always a delightful trip. Will the Canada Warblers be back? Will we see another male Blackburnian Warbler or a Northern Parula? Will we find a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher nest?

May Trip to Eastern Shore - Mike Leahy regrettably has to cancel this trip because of another obligation but he is considering a fall trip this year to visit some eastern hawk watch sites.

2012 Foxburg Birdfest May 5 and 6, 2012



Saturday May 5, 2012

- 8:00 am RiverStone Estate Birdwalk and Lunch, Foxburg, PA (*handicap accessible*) \$20
- 5:00 pm Dinner at the Allegheny Grille \$26.40
- After dinner presentations by:
- Keynote speaker, Jason Hill B.S., M.S., PhD candidate-*Jason will discuss his current findings with respect to several seasons of research into the population dynamics of grassland breeding sparrows and their relationship to the grassland habitat created by reclaimed surface mines in PA. Of particular interest will be his research at Mt. Zion/Piney Tract in Clarion County*

- Michael R. Leahy - Seneca Rocks Audubon Society-*Grassland bird calls*
- 8:00 pm Owl Prowl at RiverStone (alternate activities in case of rain) \$5

Sunday May 6, 2012

- 8:00 am Mount Zion/ Piney Tract (Important Bird Area) Birdwalk, Sligo, PA **FREE**

The RiverStone Estate spans over 1,200 acres of diverse habitat types and thus supports a vast array of bird species. The Mount Zion/Piney Tract possesses unique grassland habitat which allows for the colonization of rare species such as Grasshopper sparrows, Savannah sparrows, and Henslow's sparrows.

Tickets will be sold at the Foxburg Inn Hotel for each event individually, so you can either participate in all of them or mix and match to suit your interests.

Stay at the Foxburg Inn Hotel, situated alongside the majestic Allegheny River and receive special lodging rates. AND, even if you're not a birder, there are still plenty of other attractions to explore in Foxburg, most within walking distance from the Foxburg Inn Hotel. Visit www.gofoxburg.com to learn more about Foxburg businesses and attractions.

Call 724-659-3116 to order your tickets for each exciting event and/or make room reservations. Hurry, participation is limited and you must register by **April 21, 2012**. Feel free to e-mail Kirsten at kwilliams@foxburginn.com with any questions.

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.



Thanks to Alex Lamoreaux of State College, PA, for the Trumpeter Swan photos

Trumpeter Swan in Clarion County

~ Gloria Walzak

Gloria Walzak is a student in Ron and Gary's birding class; we thank her for contributing the following article.

A significant event occurred in the New Bethlehem Area the week of March 19 when a trumpeter swan dropped in for a visit along Redbank Creek. County Coordinator, Carole Winslow, reports that it is the first one seen in Clarion County in modern times.

The swan was wing-tagged (J53), and Carole discovered that it was a male, born in the summer of 2011 on Franklin Pond, NR Littles Corner, Ontario; the GPS coordinates of 43.33861:-80.2775. It was banded 11/3/11 by Ray Kingdon of Burlington, Ontario.

Trumpeter swans have a 6 – 7 foot wingspan, with all white wings and very long necks. This immature bird looks to be a dingy white with a

pinkish gray-black bill, unlike the coal-black bill of an adult swan.

After wintering in Tennessee, this trumpeter swan enjoyed the 80 degree temperatures in Clarion County during his short layover. He was last seen with several Canada geese and a mute swan that's been living in the area for the past three years.

A mute swan makes hissing and wheezing sounds while the trumpeter swan has a mellow, high-pitched cooing: "woo-ho, woo-woo, woo-ho." If you happen to be passing through southern Clarion County in the near future keep your eyes and ears open and maybe you'll have a chance to experience one of these beautiful birds for yourself!





Birdathon

~ Janice Horn

The Birdathon, on the calendar for Saturday, May 5 to Sunday, May 13, 2012, has been our largest source of funding since Margaret Buckwalter spearheaded it. 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 programs, 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.

The dates selected include the Migratory Bird Count on Saturday, May 12th. 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 Birdfest, 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.



Programs at Cook Forest

~ Dale Luthringer

Wednesday & Thursday, April 18-19 at 9:00 am - 'Advanced Tree Measuring Workshop' Cook Forest State Park, in conjunction with the Native Tree Society (NTS), will host a two-day Advanced Tree Measuring Workshop to the public and forest resource professionals focusing on learning the latest and most accurate methods of measuring big, tall, and noteworthy trees of Cook Forest and the Eastern United States.*

Join members from NTS, American Forests, and Laser Technologies, Inc. (LTI) as we learn various methods and accuracies of measuring trees using the traditional tangent based methods with tape & clinometer and similar triangles, and comparing them to sine based methods using clinometer and laser rangefinder. We will also learn the external baseline method, tripod corrections, diameter measurements, crown spread and crown area calculations with the following instruments: LTI TruPulse 200 and 360, LTI RD 1000 Relascope-Dendrometer, and Macroscope 25/45.

*Cost is free, but registration required. To register and for more information, please contact the Park Office at (814)744-8475 or e-mail dluthringe@pa.gov.

Friday-Sunday, April 20-22 at 9:00 am - 'Chainsaw Carvers Round-Up & Auction'

The Sawmill Center for the Arts will kick off the 2012 season with an exciting new free event, the Chainsaw Carvers Round-Up and Auction. Chainsaw carvers will be demonstrating and creating their works of art. Come watch as each piece comes to life. Auction on Saturday! Visitors will have the opportunity to bid on some of the unique and beautiful pieces created during the event. For more information please call the Sawmill Art Center at (814)927-6655 or email sawmill@pennswoods.net.

Saturday, April 28 at 9:00 am - 'Brew and Birding: Birding Cook Forest' Please bring your binoculars and coffee mugs to the Park Office to start the day off with a morning interpretive hike listening for warblers, thrushes, and goshawks in one of the Northeastern United States most magnificent old growth forests. We'll then car-pool to birding hotspots along the Clarion River. This is an excellent opportunity to learn how to identify forest birds by ear. Bald eagles and osprey have been known to make an appearance. (3 hrs)





"Bored" Snowy Owl in Worthington, PA, March 23, 2012. Thanks to Roger Higbee for the photo!

Snowy Owl Invasion

We hope you were able to get a good look at a Snowy Owl this winter. It was an "irruption" year with unprecedented numbers of these majestic Arctic birds visiting the lower 48 states. A possible reason for this phenomenon is that lemmings, one of their favorite foods, were abundant in 2011. Snowy Owls last summer fledged 5-7 young in contrast to the normal 0-2. In winter, all of these birds were competing for hunting territories, so many of them flew south.

Mr. Bowser, whose farm hosted this owl, estimated that 1500 people came to see it. 🐦

Some Interesting Links:

Hummingbird Migration Map 2012 - <http://www.hummingbirds.net/map.html>

A Bird Blog by Kate St. John of WQED - <http://www.wqed.org/birdblog/>

Julie Zickefoose's Blog - <http://juliezickefoose.blogspot.com/>

David Sibley's Blog - http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/9798.David_Allen_Sibley/blog

Roger Tory Peterson Institute

The Roger Tory Peterson Institute, a world class nature center, is not too far away from us, in Jamestown, New York, the birthplace of Roger Tory Peterson. It is definitely worth the drive.

In addition to their other displays, and a well-stocked nature store, RTPI is currently featuring a 13,000-year-old Columbian Mammoth fossil discovered in 1934 in Randolph, NY. A life-size replica cast of the skull, along with the fossilized 4-foot tusks are now on loan from the New York State Museum. This display will continue through December, 2012.

Their Fourth Annual Roger Tory Peterson Festival will be held June 8-9, 2012. This includes three featured trips: **Birding the Piney Tract (reportedly a huge hit last year)**; Warblers of Allegheny National Forest, and Birds of Allegany State Park. On the Friday evening program, RTPI's Mark Baldwin will share stories behind some of the rare objects of Peterson art and memorabilia housed in RTPI's Special Collections, and Dr. David Bird will give a presentation. Saturday's keynote speaker will be Greg Miller, one of the three birders featured in Greg Obmascik's book, *The Big Year*. (His character was played by Jack Black in the movie).

For more information, see <http://www.rtpi.org/>

PSO Annual Meeting

The Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology annual meeting will be held in Lockhaven, PA, May 18 - 20. The keynote speaker will be Dan Brauning, on a subject near and dear to our hearts: the upcoming release of the 2nd Breeding Bird Atlas Book.

To register or to read more about the field trips and other programs, see the latest PSO Newsletter at <http://www.pabirds.org/>

May your trails be crooked, winding, lonesome, dangerous, leading to the most amazing view. May your mountains rise into and above the clouds.

~ Edward Abbey

Clarion County - Fall 2011 Quarterly Report by Carole Winslow

Locations: Curllsville (CV), Kahle Lake (KL), Mount Zion (Piney Tract/SGL 330) (MZ), State Game Lands 63 (SGL63), Strattanville (ST).

The fall season for 2011 brought very little in the way of cold weather, with only mild temps and plenty of rain. **Tundra Swans** were not noted in migration as much as usual this year, with the first report from Limestone 11/11 (FW), in ST 11/19 (RM), and the last report for the county 11/30. The only significant waterfowl report for the season was that of a flock of 10 **Blue-winged Teal** at KL 9/13, not always a regular migrant noted for *Clarion* (DF,PC). At this same location and date, an immature **Bald Eagle** was present (DF,PC) with and adult bird also seen there one day earlier 9/12 (CW). Along the Clarion River near Gravel Lick a second year bird was reported 8/8-10 (RS), and also along the river near Sligo, an adult was seen next to a nesting area there mid-November (CW). These birds continue to have a regular presence in the county now, except during the coldest period of winter when waterways are frozen. Another raptor noted this year for the season is one not regularly reported, but seen in two locations this fall. A **Peregrine Falcon** was seen for several days this year, ending 8/31, along the Allegheny River in Foxburg, and noted to make use of a 200 foot rock quarry along the river there (KC). A second report was from SGL 63 on 9/17 and was a flyover bird seen during their normal migration period (LC). One unusual shorebird sighting for the fall was that of a **White-rumped Sandpiper** seen at KL 9/10-12 (JS,CW) a first for the county for this compiler. Also at KL that same date was **Semipalmated Sandpiper** and one **Solitary Sandpiper** seen on 9/12 (DF,PC). The lake has been drawn down below its normal levels the last two years for work being done, creating more shorebird habitat than is normally present here. Another excellent sighting for this location was that of a **Black Tern**, with a single bird reported 8/8 (RS) and also 9/10 (JS).

In a yard in ST, a juvenile **Black-billed Cuckoo** was seen 8/9 and captured in photos, not a regular occurrence with these secretive birds (RM). The bird was seen for only one day and no adults were present, so it's fate may have been questionable. The last report for this species was from SGL 63 on 9/24 (LC), a little late for this species. **Short-eared Owls** were first noted for the season on Rankin Rd. near CV, with a single bird 11/3 and then 3-4 birds seen there mid-November to the end of the month (CW). The only report for **Common Nighthawk** was of a single bird during migration over Knox 8/31 (ML). There was a very late adult female **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** found at the Rhoads home near Lamartine where a **Rufous Hummingbird** was seen 3 years ago. This bird was first noted on 10/25, banded by Bob Mulvihill 11/6 and last seen 11/14 (ML). For flycatchers, there was one sighting of a **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** near CV 9/21 in a location where they have been found previously in fall migration (CW), and also an interesting **Least Flycatcher** seen last for the season 9/17 also near CV, and utilizing gray dogwood berries for food as well as it's usual insect diet (CW). The first **Northern Shrike** was found at MZ 11/30, in it's typical habitat of open areas with some small trees and pines (MW). A single **Philadelphia Vireo** was noted 9/21 near CV, another migrant not always reported this season(CW). Near Limestone, **Common Ravens** were heard and seen several times through Oct and Nov (FW), with this species continuing to make apparent advancements in numbers and types of habitat used. Some good nocturnal migration flights were heard near CV both 9/17 and 9/28 at dawn, with wood, Swainson's and gray-cheeked thrushes all heard as well as some unidentified calls. The first report of **Gray-cheeked Thrush** was 9/16, seen eating honeysuckle berries near CV (CW). The last report was from the same property but the bird seen that date, 10/22, was in a large pokeberry patch with a flock of robins and cedar waxwings (CW). A **Swainson's Thrush** was noted last 9/28 in this same area, and was seen feeding on wild grapes and dogwood berries (CW). Warbler migration for the

fall was spread over much of September into October and as in past years, is often more productive and enjoyable than spring migration. The first noted species is **Northern Waterthrush**, which is not a regularly reported migrant for *Clarion*. That fact made it all the more unusual to find two of these birds together 9/14 in an overgrown hillside next to a small stream in a yard near CV (CW). **Tennessee Warblers** made a rather strong showing this year, first reported at SGL 63 on 9/17 (LC), and then also seen in small groups of 2-4 in the first two weeks of Oct in mixed flocks near CV, with last date being 10/10 (CW). Once again **Cape May Warblers** are a more common fall migrant than many other warblers, especially at a property with abundant spruce and pine near CV, where they were seen daily in numbers up to 4 between 9/12 and 10/10. Both females, imm and adult, as well as good numbers of adult males still in bright plumage were seen (CW). **Bay-breasted Warblers** were seen in the excellent migrant habitat present at SGL 63 both 9/17 and 9/24, along with a good mix of other warblers including **Black-and-white**, **Nashville**, **Blackburnian**, **Hooded**, **Pine**, **Magnolia**, **Chestnut-sided**, **Tennessee**, **Black-throated Green** and **Blackpoll**, the last being seen in excellent numbers on 9/24 with a count of 25+ (LC). The rather late last date for **Blackpoll Warbler** was 10/16 near CV, where one was seen as is more common in fall, down in low shrubs or even weeds, allowing for nice plumage views of this treetop bird (CW). A later **Prairie Warbler** was also seen 10/10 at the same location, feeding on gray dogwood berries, along with several **Palm Warblers** feeding on grass seeds in the nearby field (CW). Rounding out warbler reports is that of **Wilson's Warbler**, another migrant that is not seen every year here. A single bird was noted 10/5 along an overgrown hillside/stream area near CV, an adult male (CW). **American Tree Sparrows** were first noted this fall 11/4 in overgrown field areas near CV, as usual being spotted there before showing up at feeders, which they do later in the season and in winter (CW). **Chipping Sparrows** had already departed shortly before for wintering grounds, with the last

reported date for them 10/31 near CV (CW). Though they do breed in the county, **Clay-colored Sparrows** are not typically seen in migration here, so a report of a single bird 10/10 with a mixed sparrow flock during migration was unusual, although it was seen in a reclaimed strip mine area near CV similar to where they do nest (CW). Of the regular grassland species for *Clarion*, **Henslow's Sparrows** typically are not found after mid-August, but this year two birds were heard singing weakly at dusk 9/28 along Rankin Rd near CV where they are known to nest, a late date for the county (CW). **Lincoln's Sparrows** made their usual appearance in overgrown fields and roadside shrubs near CV, with the first date 9/28 when 3 birds were seen, and then a last date of 10/5 in this same location. With so much great sparrow habitat in the county for these birds in migration, it is likely that they would be found in more areas and greater numbers if more observers were present and familiar with these beautiful sparrows. As it continues to apparently decline, **Rusty Blackbird** reports are typically hard to come by. This fall the only sighting reported was of a single bird heard calling and seen in flight with a flock of **Red-winged Blackbirds** coming in to roost at dusk near CV 10/22 (CW). A single adult male **Orchard Oriole** was seen near CV 8/12, rather late for males of this species. Small groups of females and young were seen in the same area sporadically through mid-August, feeding often at weedy field edges and also on invasive honeysuckle berries, last date being 8/17 (CW). **Purple Finches** made their first showing since breeding season with 3 birds appearing at a feeder near CV 9/24, and continuing sporadically through 10/5(CW).

Observers: **Carole Winslow, 159 Moggey Rd, Sligo, PA 16255, (814) 745-3818, cjnal@windstream.net**, Pat Conway, Kurt Crosbie, Lewis Crowell, Gary Edwards, Deb Freed, Mike Leahy, Ron Montgomery, Sally Mortimer, Richard Nugent, Ruth Schurr, Jerry Stanley, Russ States, Mark Vass, Mike Weible, Fran Williams.

Dates to Remember:

- March 31 - Conneaut Lake Marsh Outing
- April 11 - Program on Bats
- April 21 - Presque Isle State Park Outing
- May 5 & 6 - Foxburg Birdfest
- May 9 - Members' Night
- May 5 to May 13 - Birdathon (choose a day)
- May 12 - PA Migration Count
- May 12 - Oil Creek State Park Warbler Walk
- May 18-20 - PSO Annual Meeting

Watch our website for information on our
Summer Picnic

SRAS Leadership Team

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Peregrine Falcon sketch by Daniel S. Kilby, from Audubon chapter resources.

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