



THE DRUMMER

www.senecarocksaudubon.org



September, 2007

Volume 24, No. 1

**Next Meeting – September 10,
Room 150, Becker Hall
Social – 6:30 p.m. Program – 7:00 p.m.**

Common Nighthawks Presented by Tim Hoppe

Tim Hoppe is a wildlife diversity biologist for the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Northwest Region. As a diversity biologist, his primary responsibility is to assist private landowners in developing habitat management plans for species of concern. Before accepting this position Tim held several limited and full time positions with the Game Commission including forestry intern, biologist aide, and a member of the food and cover crew at Pymatuning Wildlife Management Area.

Tim earned his associate's degree from Penn State University at Dubois in Wildlife Technology. He then attended Edinboro University where he received a bachelor's degree in Natural Science, Mathematics, and Wildlife.

Join us for this informative program, which will tie in with our on-going "field trip" – the Oil City Nighthawk Watch.



Common Nighthawk by Steven D'Amato

Common Nighthawk Watch

by Jim Wilson

August 20th thru September 15th
6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Oil City Marina

Come join us at the Oil City Marina for the Common Nighthawk watch. Bring a lawn chair and refreshments if you wish. We will be counting Nighthawks each evening, rain or shine. Gary and Jim have been in charge of this count for several years, and last year counted over eight hundred migrating Nighthawks.

Directions:

From the Cranberry Mall, take Route 257 into Oil City, where it meets Route 62. Follow

Route 62 to the second bridge (also the second stop light). Make a left turn at this light (Petroleum Street), go one block to West First Street. Turn right on West First Street and proceed 7 blocks to Wyllis Street. Turn right on Wyllis Street; at the bottom of the hill is the Oil City Marina, with parking in the lot on the right.



Great crested Flycatcher by Steven D'Amato

Karl Schurr

Our Audubon chapter is saddened by the loss of member and faithful attendee, Karl Schurr, who passed away on July 26th after a short illness. Mr. Schurr was a retired Bowling Green State University professor of biology whose expertise on water quality and crop pests was called into service internationally. He served on the BGSU faculty for 30 years, retiring in 1992, when he and his wife Ruth moved to Fisher, PA.

He and Ruth spear-headed our chapter's efforts with the American Chestnut Foundation, to bring back the American Chestnut Tree. We will miss Karl's interesting comments and sense of humor at our meetings. Our sympathies go out to Ruth.

Cook Forest State Park Seeks Adopt-A-Trail Volunteers

Cook Forest State Park is accepting volunteers to adopt various hiking, cross country skiing, and equestrian trails. Adopt-A-Trail conservation volunteer duties entail walking a trail of their choice 4 times a year, while picking up litter, removing small branches, and noting tree hazards along the trail. Interested applicants can obtain a Conservation Volunteer Application at:

www.dcnr.state.pa.us/consor

or by contacting Dale Luthringer at (814)744-8475 or email: dluthringe@state.pa.us

The 2007 Birdathon

--Janice Horn

The 2007 Birdathon was held during the second week of May with several teams going out and about to locate as many species as possible. In addition to IDing the birds sponsors were sought to support the programs of SRAS. Ron Montgomery started early to collect money for the Birdathon when he donated the fee he received for giving a program. Adding to that the pledges he received he came in the with largest amount, \$510.00, for the Birdathon this year. Altogether we collected \$2,080.30, a little over half of last year's amount, in a year in which the Birdathon was somewhat laid back.

The team of Ron Montgomery, Deb Freed and Carole Willenpart ended the day with the most species, 107. Flo and Jim McGuire succeeded in finding 100, coming in second.

Thank you to everyone who participated. Those who were birding for the Birdathon included Paulette Colantonio, Deb Freed, Walter Fye, Sarah & Harvey Ganoe, Janice Horn, Flo & Jim McGuire, Shirley Monrean, Ron Montgomery, Evelyn Myers, Ruth & Karl Schurr, Carole Willenpart, Fran & Jack Williams. Many more were a part of our major fundraiser by pledging and contributing.



Seneca Rocks Receives Grant From Audubon

Welcome to Our Grassland IBA

Seneca Rocks wants the grasslands and sparrows to be as much a part of PA Wilds as rivers and forests, bear and elk. The Piney Tract Grassland IBA located on State Gameland 330 has already drawn visitors and researchers. The Grassland Seminar sponsored by Seneca Rocks on June 1, 2007 brought together experts on the resident sparrows and habitat challenges of the non-native grassland.

Welcome to Our Grassland IBA project will increase public awareness of Pennsylvania Important Bird Area (IBA) #21 and garner support for habitat conservation. Seneca Rocks is partnering with the Pennsylvania Game Commission to treat invasive vegetation while additional habitat management strategies are being explored. Continued research on the landscape will help to shape the management objectives.

The first thing a visitor will notice when the project is completed will be a sign recognizing the grassland and the birds. During the breeding season a display box will hold informational brochures describing the history, significance of the grassland, map of the area, and tips on how to identify the species by field marks and songs. Recordings of the bird songs will be copied onto CDs that will be made available to visitors and student groups through both public and school library systems.

Other project activities include preparing volunteers to serve as guides to the grassland for school groups and visitors. Several Seneca Rocks members have been taking visiting

birders to the Piney Tract IBA for many years now. It will be good to have a list of trained volunteers to respond to these requests. School groups will be encouraged to study grassland habitats through Audubon Adventure educational supplements and by scheduling field trips to the IBA.

The Seneca Rocks website has been a source of great information about the Piney Tract. Members and visitors have found directions to the grassland and local contacts for personal tours. The grant proposes to create a grassland observation posting page to collect sightings at Piney and help to identify other significant grassland habitats on former reclaimed surface mines.

The collaborative grant funds of \$1000 will be used to accomplish our planned activities and erect the permanent signs. George Miller of the Pennsylvania Game Commission is assisting with the design and permitting of the new signs. Seneca Rocks is grateful to Sarah Sargent, Audubon IBA Coordinator, for reviewing our proposal and forwarding it to Audubon Pennsylvania.

- Deb Freed



Annual Picnic –

Our Annual Picnic was held on August 13 at the home of Fran and Jack Williams. We had beautiful weather, a nice crowd, and lots of good food! Many thanks to Fran and Jack for hosting this fun event!

September Meeting –

We will be taking orders for the popular Audubon calendars; also, we will be selling hats with our new logo for \$10.



*Photo by Flo McGuire –
Will Blozan atop the Seneca Hemlock*

Cook Forest Big Tree Extravaganza

-Dale Luthringer

In April, Cook Forest State Park, in conjunction with the Eastern Native Tree Society (ENTS) hosted a series of free events open to the public focusing on the old growth forests of Cook Forest and the Eastern United States.

The weather was gorgeous, the speakers were awesome, the presentations went well, the hikes were vigorous, Will Blozan soared through the air, and Bob Leverett didn't put anyone to sleep!!! Matter of fact, when Bob packed the Log Cabin Inn to capacity with the public anticipating a 2 hr. trig lesson, I knew the rest of the day was going to go well. The whole event was a great learning experience. It was also an excellent opportunity for the public to get involved, ask questions, and learn about the intrinsic attributes of old growth forest ecology. It may be hard to believe, but we had just shy of 500 program participants attend throughout the day. Not shabby for a mid-Spring event.

Sunday's field trip to the Maple Drive Old Growth Area proved to be another beautiful and successful day, with Will finding 3 more black cherries in the 130ft class!

7.2ft CBH x 130ft high

7.9ft CBH x 132.8ft high

5.1ft CBH x 134ft high (new park H:D record)
(CBH = Circumference at Breast Height)

There very well could be more in this stand. There's still one large section of unmeasured territory here. We also re-measured the one 160ft class white pine in this area to 162.3 ft high.

The main public programs on Saturday went quite well. Bob Leverett's presentation was VERY good. It was a great trig lesson and gave me more insight into various ENTS measuring methodologies.

After Bob's presentation many of us were on edge after sucking down a high octane home brew of coffee and a few dozen very sugary donuts. So, what better way to burn it off but to go out and apply the techniques in the field. We then started a vigorous uphill cross country hike off the Seneca Trail to see the Davies Black Cherry, the current PA American Beech height champ, and the Camp Trail Hemlock with about 75 people in tow ranging in all ages, from maybe 2 to 82. Numerous ENTS members jumped in to help field questions and demonstrate measuring techniques along the way.

The Davies Black Cherry is still the tallest known specimen for the NE U.S. at 11.4 ft CBH x 137.3 ft high which was last measured and also tape dropped by Will at the spring 2005 event. The current American Beech PA height champ was also last measured at the 2005 event to 7.5 ft CBH x 127.5 ft high (by John Eicholz). The Camp Trail hemlock, last measured by Carl and me this winter, went to 13.8 ft CBH x 119.2 ft high.

Next was Will Blozan's climb up the Seneca Hemlock. But to get there, we had to take another vigorous, yes, you guessed it, uphill climb. It was just a short hike, and ended up with about 85 people there to witness the event. Will tape dropped it to 145.4 ft high, still the tallest known hemlock in the Northeastern U.S. What an absolutely gorgeous day to climb. With the public below, the Jani Pine just to the west of us, the Kershner Pine just uphill to the NW, and God blessing us with perfect weather from above, we couldn't have asked for a better day.

After dinner, it was time for the evening lecture series. First off was Professor Gary Beluzo from Holyoke Community College with his presentation entitled 'The G.I.S.T. of Mapping Old Growth Forests, followed next by forest ecologist Scott Bearer from The Nature Conservancy in Pennsylvania explaining the 'Pennsylvania Old Growth Forest Restoration Project'. Third was research ecologist Todd Ristau from the U.S. Forest Service presenting 'Seventy-two Years of Change in the Vegetation Composition of Heart's Content Scenic Area'. Last, but certainly not least, was Dr. Lee Frelich, Director of Hardwood Ecology at the University of Minnesota as he brought us up to date on 'Human vs. Natural Disturbance in Northern Hardwood, Hemlock, and White Pine Forests'.

All evening presenters were excellent and received 'prestigious' awards to help commemorate this noteworthy event.

Read more about the Eastern Native Tree Society here -- <http://www.nativetreesociety.org/index.html>

Cook Forest State Park Programs

-- Dale Luthringer

Saturday, September 1 at 2:00 pm - 'Cooksburg Petroglyphs'

Please meet at the Park Office to take a short, but challenging hike to view historic petroglyphs that were carved by the Indians centuries ago. Come help us as we attempt to possibly identify more petroglyphs in the area. This is a very challenging hike in slippery, wet, and steep terrain. Small children and those with physical ailments are encouraged not to attend. (2 hrs)

Saturday, September 1 at 8:00 pm - 'Native American Villages at Fishbasket'

Ken Burkett, Field Associate with the Carnegie Museum, will present a slide program of his compilation of decades of archaeological work on the Indian villages at Fishbasket. Mr. Burkett's presentation will focus mainly on the 2006 excavation

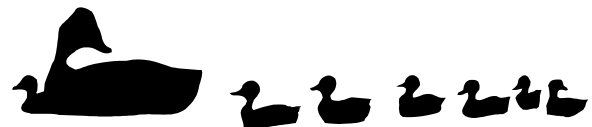
of this site near present-day New Bethlehem along Redbank Creek. Please bring your chairs and blankets to the Ridge Camp Park Amphitheater to take a look back in time to learn how local Native Americans lived along our waterways. (1 hr)

Sunday, September 2 at 11:30 am - 'Fire Tower/Seneca Point Historical Tour'

Please bring your binoculars and meet at the Fire Tower Parking Lot for a 45 minute historical interpretive tour of the Fire Tower and Seneca Point. Learn about local logging history, observe Indian sign, and take a breathtaking view from the box at the very top of the Fire Tower which will be open until 2:30 pm. (3 hrs)

Saturday & Sunday, September 8 & 9 at 9:00 am - 'Clarion River Clean-up Day'

Please join us at Cook Riverside Cabins, 1/2 mile up-river from the RT36 Cooksburg Bridge, to help clean up various sections of the National Wild & Scenic Clarion River. After a busy summer season, there is lots of work that needs to be done. The Pale Whale Canoe Fleet will provide free canoes and transport to various sections along the river from Halton to Cooksburg. Please pack a lunch and bring plenty of water. If Saturday is rained out, then we'll go Sunday instead. Participants must pre-register at Cook Riverside Cabins by calling (814)744-8300. Individuals, scout groups, and civic organizations are encouraged to attend. (6 hrs)



Forget not that the earth delights to feel your bare feet and the wind longs to play with your hair.

~ Kahlil Gibran

2nd PBBA Region 45 Update 2007



*Downy Woodpecker
by Rosemary Gilbert Bell*

The summer flew by and so did hundreds of bird species for the State of Pennsylvania. I would like to thank all of you who participated in the block/habitat busting outings this year.

My goal was to cover all of the block 6's on page 45 and I am happy to report that we did it! You may also be pleased to know that only two of the 84 blocks in Region 45 do not

have any data. Only two: 45B44 and 45D44.

If my calculations are correct, we now have 140 species for Region 45 and 33 of our 84 blocks are owned, nine are checked complete, but data can always be added. If you are interested in other specifics, please check the website:

<http://www.carnegiemnh.org/atlas/index.htm>.

Over the winter, I will be developing a strategy for next year's Atlassing. For sure, we will need to work on owls and wetland species. Be thinking about some wetland areas that you might be familiar with so that we can be ready to go next spring. Your suggestions and ideas are always welcome. Drop me an e-mail at bkeeper1@alltel.net.

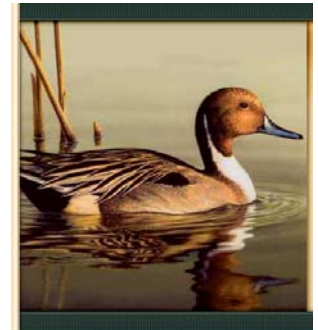
Again, thank you for your enthusiastic support over the past four years. Working with all of you on the Atlas has been a joy.

Kudos to all!

--Pat Conway
Regional Coordinator
Region 45

Buying a Home for Wildlife: Duck Stamps

When most people hear the words "duck stamp," they automatically associate it with hunting waterfowl. And yes, the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, commonly called the Duck Stamp, is a Federal



requirement for all individuals over 16 years of age who hunt waterfowl. But all too often, the words "migratory bird" and "conservation" become lost. Since 1934, the Duck Stamp has played a vital role in the conservation of wetlands and wildlife habitat. Many species of birds, including water-birds, shorebirds, raptors, and water-associated songbirds, have all benefited directly from the revenue generated by the sale of Duck Stamps.

In the almost 75 years since its creation, the Duck Stamp has raised nearly \$700 million, which has been used to purchase over 5 million acres of wetland and grassland habitat for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wildlife Refuge System. In fact, many refuges were purchased solely using stamp dollars. Throughout our country, national wildlife refuges were established to protect and enhance the resting and feeding grounds of migratory birds, creating a chain of stepping stones along major migration routes. Refuges quickly became spectacular locations for bird watching and other wildlife-dependent recreation.

It should please buyers to know that, with the purchase of each \$15 stamp, **98 percent of the revenue goes directly to securing wetland and grassland habitat in the National Wildlife Refuge System.** Another "perk" for purchasing a Duck Stamp is that a valid (current year) stamp serves as an entrance pass at any national wildlife refuge that charges an entrance fee.

Unfortunately, sales of Duck Stamps in the northeast have been dwindling since the late 1970's. Now some bird organizations are stepping up to join waterfowlers in helping to increase the sale of Duck Stamps. The Georgia Ornithological Society started an effort to get bird watchers to buy and display the stamp, as did the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology. Eagle Optics has also joined by promoting the stamp and, with all binocular sales, distributing free stamp holders that can be attached to binocular straps.

The 2007-2008 Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp is now on sale at your local U.S. post office, national wildlife refuge, and even on line at www.duckstamp.com. Purchase a stamp and be a part of the continuing effort to save land for birds, for other wildlife, and for America's future generations.

For more information about the Duck Stamp and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, visit www.fws.gov.



Eastern Towhee by Steven D'Amato

Buzzard Swamp Outing

The morning of April 28 was cool and a little windy when 10 birders gathered at Buzzard Swamp for a joint outing of the Todd Bird Club and Seneca Rocks Audubon. Participants were: Val Means, Debbie Shirey, Ruth and Karl Schurr, Margaret and Roger Higbee, Lee Carnahan, Dory Jacobs and Flo and Jim McGuire.

From the parking lot we heard Eastern Towhee, American Robin, Northern Flicker, Brown-headed Cowbird, and Mourning Dove. Seven Common Mergansers flew over, and a Common Raven was heard croaking. We walked around the loop

clockwise - as we began through the evergreens, we heard Red-breasted Nuthatch, American Crow, and many Black-throated Green Warblers. We got some good looks at the many Ruby-crowned Kinglets which were migrating through. Soon Field Sparrows and Song Sparrows were singing, a Ruffed Grouse was drumming, and we saw a pair of Wood Ducks. Golden-crowned Kinglets, Black-capped Chickadees and American Goldfinch were also seen, and Tree Swallows were doing their tireless swooping over the water in search of insects. A Bufflehead, some Mallards, an American Coot and many Canada Geese were on the water, and a European Starling was spotted carrying nesting material. The reeds harbored many Red-winged Blackbirds, and we heard the ringing trill of a Swamp Sparrow. Two gull-like birds circling over the water were identified as a Bonaparte's Gull and a Forster's Tern, thanks to Margaret's sharp eye. Many Barn Swallows were also hawking insects; a Turkey Vulture, 2 Ring-billed Gulls, 2 Killdeer and a Common Loon were seen.

We walked a little faster at the far end of the loop, where the cool wind was blowing off the water. We added a Brown Thrasher, 4 Common Grackles, and an American Kestrel. Scoping the mudflats and shallow ponds, we found 3 Wilson's Snipe, 4 Blue-winged Teal, 2 Lesser Yellowlegs, 2 Green Herons, and 5 Ring-necked Ducks. A Northern Harrier was spotted, also an Eastern Bluebird, and an Osprey was first heard, then seen perched in a tree, where he obligingly stayed while we all got to watch him through the scope. As we got into the woods toward the end of the loop, we saw a Red-tailed Hawk, heard a Blue-headed Vireo, saw a Brown Creeper and 3 Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. We added Chipping Sparrow, Blue Jay, Great Blue Heron, Red-shouldered Hawk, Purple Finch, Broad-winged Hawk and Cooper's Hawk, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Dark-eyed Junco for a total of 57 species. Not bad.

Most of the group then went to Bettina's Restaurant (formerly Guiseppes) in Marienville for some camaraderie and a great Italian lunch.

For more information about our chapter and current updates, please check our website at www.senecarocksaudubon.org

Looking Ahead

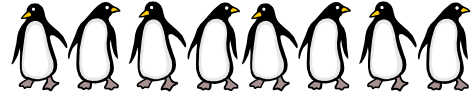
October 8 program -
Duane Diefenbach, Grassland Sparrows
November 12 program -
Sharon Pillar, Global Warming
December 10 - Members' night

Field Trips & Events

Beaver Creek nest box Maintenance -
October 15 or 18
Allegheny Front Hawkwatch -
October 25 & 26
Presque Isle Ducks - November 16



Hosting Upcoming Meetings:
September - Deb Freed & Janice Horn
October - Kathy Pokrifka



SRAS Board Members

President --	
Vice-president, Programs - Pete Dalby	782-3227
Treasurer, Birdseed, Birdathon - Janice Horn	226-7367
Website, Drummer Editor - Flo McGuire	755-3672
Field Trips, Events - Jim Wilson	676-5455
Secretary, Membership - Deb Freed	226-4719
Community Programs - Ron Montgomery	764-6088
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History - Pat Conway	849-6315
Mill Creek Coalition -	
Beaver Creek - Walter Fye	797-1019

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