



THE DRUMMER

www.senecarocksaudubon.org



October, 2007

Volume 24, No. 2



Savannah Sparrow by Steven D'Amato

**Next Meeting – October 8,
Room 150, Becker Hall
Social – 6:30 p.m. Program – 7:00 p.m.**

Grassland Sparrows Presented by Duane Diefenbach

Duane Diefenbach will speak on a subject near and dear to our hearts: the ecology of grassland sparrows on reclaimed surface mines in Pennsylvania. Dr. Diefenbach is in charge of the research currently ongoing at Piney Tract. At a time when most grassland birds are exhibiting dramatic population declines across North America, Henslow's, Grasshopper and Savannah Sparrows have found new homes on reclaimed surface mines in western Pennsylvania, including our IBA, Piney Tract.

A Unit Leader for the Pennsylvania Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, Duane has been conducting research on grassland sparrows since the

(Continued on p. 2)

Allegheny Front Hawk Watch October 11th & 12th

Jim Wilson, Field Trip Chair

This popular field trip for migrating hawks is held annually around this time. This year it will be October 11th and 12th, Thursday and Friday. You may come on either or both days; if you wish to stay overnight, the Jean Bonnet Restaurant provides an excellent dinner, and the Shawnee Motel is a pleasant and reasonable local motel.

Jerry Stanley has agreed to join us at the Allegheny Front to assist in hawk identification and generally help us get the most from the trip. The field trip is scheduled earlier than usual this year; Jerry said that although we will be less likely to see a Golden Eagle, the numbers of raptors should be greater.

We will meet at the parking lot at the Hawk Watch. You can arrive and leave anytime you wish. The gate opens at 8:30 a.m., and the trip takes about 2.5 hours from Clarion. The parking lot at Allegheny Front is small so please consider car pooling with someone whose plans correspond with yours.

(Continued on next page)

See your **Bird Seed Sale** form on page 7. Order deadline is October 17; pickup at Agway from November 5th through 10th.



Allegheny Front, *continued*

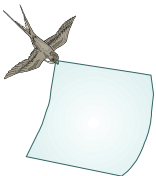
Some of us plan to stay overnight at the Shawnee motel, the phone number is 814-733-2828; prices are \$45 to \$47 (same as last year), depending upon the number of people and beds. We will probably go to the Jean Bonnet Restaurant about 5 miles east of Shellsburg on Thursday evening. The convenience store next to the motel opens at 7:30 a.m. but the fresh donuts are often not done until 8:00 a.m. The Mobil station five miles east is more prepared.

The weather can be severe on the Allegheny Front and it can change quickly. We have had snow, intense fog, rain and wind, but most folks say that bad weather and good hawk watching go hand in hand! Since we hope to see lots of hawks, be sure to bring your warmest and most water-repellent clothes.

Two hundred red tails and a dozen golden eagles in a day at Allegheny Hawk Watch is not unusual. This trip is always an unpredictable adventure. It has always been fun. I hope you can join us.

Directions – From Clarion:

Take Route 66 South to Route 422; then take 422 East to Route 219 (just west of Ebensburg). Go south on Route 219 to Route 56. Route 56 east will take you to Route 160. Take Route 160 to Central City. In Central City, Route 160 turns sharply Right. Don't follow. Go straight on Main Street 0.4 mi to T on Shaffer Mt Road. Turn left. Go one mile to first Right, which is Lambert Mt. Road. Follow Lambert three miles to "crossroad" where the main road goes left continue straight ahead for ½ mile to a driveway with a blue gate on the right. Follow the driveway to the parking lot.



A note from Margaret Buckwalter encourages us to check out Marcia Bonta's new blog:

<http://marciabonta.wordpress.com/>

Marcia Bonta, a naturalist writer from Tyrone, PA, is the author of 9 books and has written a nature column for *Pennsylvania Game News* for many years.

A friend of Seneca Rocks, Marcia has given programs for our chapter and has invited us on field trips to her property, Plummer Hollow.

Duane Diefenbach, *continued*

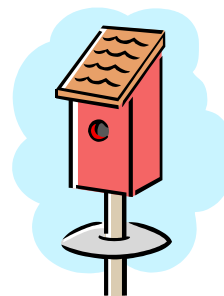
mid-1990's in collaboration with Dan Brauning of the Pennsylvania Game Commission. His research has focused on developing methods to estimate abundance. Graduate students and researchers under Duane's direction have investigated characteristics of reclaimed surface mines selected by Henslow's, Grasshopper, and Savannah Sparrows, as well as their singing behavior, nest success, nest site selection, and survival rates. Current research is ongoing in Clarion and Clearfield Counties with the goal of developing a long-term dataset on banded birds to study fidelity to breeding sites and survival rates. Research to date is indicating that nest success is sufficient to maintain viable populations of these species.

Many of us met Duane when he spoke at our Grassland Conference in June, and are happy to welcome him back to Clarion. Please join us to learn more about his interesting research.

Bluebird Box Repair

Beaver Creek

by Jim Wilson



On October 15, 2007 (October 18, 2007; alternate date due to weather) we will meet at Beaver Creek to clean, repair and replace bluebird boxes. Time: 9:00 a.m. till (?)

Directions:

Beaver Creek is located approximately 3 miles West of Knox on route 208. The parking lot and picnic pavilion will be on the right side of the road.

Materials supplied: Cordless Drill, Wire, Sledge Hammer, Steel Posts -6ft (?), 4ft stepladder, Bolts, 10 New Boxes, Wrenches, Nails/Screws.

Material Needed: Stepladders, Hammers, Wrenches, more Cordless Drills.

Bring a lunch, gloves, blaze orange clothing and enjoy the fall season.





Membership

by Deb Freed

Who are you and why did you invite me to your picnic?

This past summer I had a few phone calls from people inquiring as to why they were invited to the annual SRAS picnic. I responded by explaining that their membership in National Audubon automatically enrolls them as local chapter members. In fact, the national organization provides the labels on-line that we use to mail the postcards and the *Drummer*.

Membership in National Audubon and the Seneca Rocks chapter supports the conservation work of the organization. Most members who receive the *Drummer* became members of SRAS automatically with their response to notices to join the national organization. Throughout the year these renewal notices are sent to members with a variety of offers regardless of their membership expiration date. One way to check when your membership expires is to look at the label on the magazine or the label on the *Drummer*.

National Audubon members also receive the acclaimed Audubon magazine. Some folks don't want the magazine and indicate that preference when joining. Other individuals want only to join the local chapter. They do that through a \$10 membership paid directly to SRAS. This year a date of renewal for SRAS is printed on the *Drummer* label. If you choose to get the *Drummer* on-line, your renewal date will be printed on an annual picnic postcard, usually in August, confirming your e-mail address.

Editor's Note- from time to time we will include a membership form in the Drummer. (see p. 6). You may use this form or provide it to a friend who is interested in joining.

Welcome, Wildlife Society

Welcome to the Wildlife Society of Clarion University. Our partnership with the WS this year has made it possible to meet in Becker Hall

on the campus. Thank you! Seneca Rocks extends an invitation to all the students and faculty to attend our programs and join our fieldtrips. Check out our website www.senecarocksaudubon.org for the latest newsletter and announcements.

A note to Seneca Rocks members from Chelsy Iorio, president of the Wildlife Society:



I wanted to inform you of some of the events we have coming up in the next few weeks. We are participating in a **litter clean-up of State Gameland 72 and some other areas surrounding Clarion on Sunday, September 30th.**

We have not officially agreed on a departure time yet, but, until otherwise notified, we'll leave from Tippin gym at 10 a.m. We'll also have a cookout and social after we get done. We would love for you to join us, whether it be for the clean-up or to enjoy some food and drink afterwards, or both, of course!

Another event we have coming up in the near future is a **camping trip on October 13-14th.** The plans are not absolutely concrete yet, but we would ideally leave at around noon for a local camping site (probably Cook Forest) for a day of hiking and outdoor enjoyment and return the following day before noon. As always, the company of your group would make the event all the more enjoyable.

For more information, please email Chelsy at s_cliorio@clarion.edu.

DID YOU KNOW?

Singer Willie Nelson has opened BioWillie Diesel stations in eight southern and western states that sell bio-diesel, "a clean-burning renewable diesel replacement made from vegetable oils and animal fats". Bio-diesel and ethanol (roughly 20% of the U.S. corn crop is being converted to ethanol) are bio-mass-based fuels that usually get mixed at the 10% level for cleaner-burning gasoline. The U.S. national energy policy calls for doubling of ethanol production from the current percentage of 2% of transportation fuel by 2012.



Programs at Cook Forest State Park

by Dale Luthringer

Thursday, October 4 at 6:00pm - 'Night Hike'

Please meet at the Fire Tower Parking Lot for an evening hike to Seneca Point. Come search for owls, raccoons, porcupines, coyotes, and other critters of the night. Learn some of the adaptive designs of night animals that make them experts for life at night through interactive demonstrations. (2 hrs)

Saturday, October 6 at 9:00am - 'Searching for the Giants' Join the park naturalist at the Log Cabin Inn Environmental Learning Classroom as we comb the woods to document tall and exceptional trees of Cook Forest. The Forest Cathedral holds the most remarkable white pine stand in the Northeastern U.S., but don't forget about the monster Eastern hemlock, black cherry, Northern red and white oak in Cook Forest's seven other old growth forest areas. We will be documenting very seldom seen areas of the park, which may include the following sites: Cook Trail, Deer Meadows, Seneca Forest, Ridge Camp, Maple Drive, Swamp Natural Area. We have the potential to break current height records for a number of Northeastern U.S. trees. Be prepared to car-pool to study areas. (2.5hrs)

Saturday, October 6 at 12:30pm - '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 330pm. (3 hrs)

Saturday, October 20 at 8:00am - 'Woodsy Owl Workday' Have you been looking for a way to get involved with Cook Forest State Park? Please consid-

er joining us for the day to help maintain the park through various work projects. Woodsy Owl and Smokey Bear will be here to help also. Lunch will be provided. Free camping Friday and/or Saturday nights may be available with prior notice before 10/5/07. Please contact us two weeks in advance if you are planning to join us for the day so that we can have a work project lined up for you. (5.5hrs)

Saturday, October 27 at 7:00pm - 'Stargazing the Night Sky' Please bring your chairs, blankets, and telescopes to the Ridge Camp Park Amphitheater for an evening of stargazing with Dr. David Hurd, Edinboro University astronomy professor. Dr. Hurd will have a couple of his high quality telescopes for us to view the intricate design of the heavens. Pray for good weather! In case of rain, an intriguing program will still be held at the Nuthole Pavilion, located at the entrance to Ridge Camp. (1 hr)

National Aviary News

A female Andean Condor chick born June 28 at the National Aviary is looking for a name. The chick, which was about the size of a baseball at birth, has until recently remained tucked snugly out of sight under her mother in a secluded corner of her outdoor exhibit. Now that she has begun to venture forth, visitors can enjoy seeing her explore her environment and help the National Aviary select a name.

The chick will play an important role in the survival of her species. Once she has matured, she will be released in South America as part of the AZA (Association of Zoos and Aquariums) Andean Condor Species Survival Plan, a closely managed breeding program. In 2005, Lianni and Rhodan's previous offspring, a two-year old male condor named Kendall, was released in Bogota, Colombia and according to recent tracking reports, is thriving in his new home.

The Andean Condor (*Vulture gryphus*) is one of the largest birds of prey in the world, boasting a 10-foot wingspan and weighing in at up to 20 pounds when mature. The species, whose global conservation status is listed as near threatened, is found in high mountainous ranges and open grasslands throughout the Andes Mountains, from

Colombia to Tierra del Fuego, Argentina. Andean Condors usually lay only one egg every two years, and wild populations of Andean Condor have been in decline due to hunting, lead poisoning from shot left in carcasses, and collision with high tension wires and aircraft. Birds also die after eating poisoned carcasses targeted for mammal predators.

Daily viewing times for the Andean Condor chick are at 9:30 am and 3:30 pm.

If you know a youngster who would like to enter the contest to name the Condor, entry forms are available at the National Aviary and on-line at www.aviary.org. Forms must be mailed or delivered to the National Aviary by November 1. National Aviary staff will select the winning name and a naming celebration will be held November 10th. The contest is open to children 12 and under. Each child submitting a name will receive a free children's pass, and the winner will receive a one-year family membership to the National Aviary and admission to other special Aviary programs.

The National Aviary is open seven days a week, 9 am to 5 pm. Admission is \$9 adults; \$8 seniors; \$7.50 children ages two and up. Children under two admitted free. More information by calling 412.323.7235 or clicking www.aviary.org.



16th Annual Alliance Banquet

Traditions Banquet Center
Shipperville, PA

Thursday October 11, 2007

Doors Open at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 7:00 p.m.

Tickets \$40, Checks payable to Alliance for
Wetlands & Wildlife, 22830 Route 68, Clarion,
PA 16214 814-226-7880



Note -
Our Christmas Bird Count
will be held Saturday,
December 15, 2007

Birds Get Little Respect

Contributed by Ron Montgomery

From www.wordsmith.org and their AWAD (A Word A Day) emails.

Birds get little respect. We tend to look down at non-human animals in general, but we are particularly unfair when it comes to birds (although we have to look up at them).

We call a stupid fellow a "bird brain". Australians call him a galah (a type of cockatoo). Something useless is said to be "for the birds". We name someone vain and self-conscious a peacock. One who is talkative or a hoarder is labeled a magpie. A cowardly or fearful fellow is a chicken... the list is endless.

We even kill two birds with one stone. A better idiom would be to feed two birds with one grain. A word in the head is worth two in the book.

stormy petrel - 1. Any of various small sea birds of the family Hydrobatidae having dark feathers and lighter underparts, also known as Mother Carey's Chicken. 2. One who brings trouble or whose appearance is a sign of coming trouble.

The birds got the name storm-petrel or stormy petrel because old-time sailors believed their appearance foreshadowed a storm. It's not certain why the bird is named petrel. One unsubstantiated theory is that it is named after St Peter who walked on water in the Gospel of Matthew. The petrel's habit of flying low over water with legs extended gives the appearance that it's walking on the water.

jaywalk - To cross a street in a reckless manner, disregarding traffic rules.

As with other birds, the name jaybird denotes a naive person or simpleton. Early last century, country folks visiting big cities were often oblivious of any approaching traffic when they were crossing streets. Eventually their nickname, jays, became associated with crossing a street illegally.

clay pigeon - Someone in a situation vulnerable to be taken advantage of.

After a piece of baked clay, called a clay pigeon, thrown into the air as a flying target in shooting practice.

kibitz - 1. To look on at some activity and offer unwanted advice or criticism. 2. To chat or banter.

From Yiddish kibitsen, from German kiebitzen (to look on at cards), from Kiebitz (busybody, literally pewit or lapwing, a shorebird with a bad reputation as a meddler).

catbird seat - A position of power and advantage.

A catbird (named after its catlike call) is known to build a pile of rocks to attract a mate and sit on the highest point around. This expression was often used by Brooklyn Dodgers baseball commentator Red Barber and further popularized by the author James Thurber in his story "The Catbird Seat" where a character often utters trite phrases, including the expression "sitting in the catbird seat".
Editor's note: Now aren't we all wise as an owl?

RRF/HMANA Conference

An international conference of the Raptor Research Foundation and Hawk Migration Association of North America was held in the Hawk Mountain, PA, area September 12-16, 2007. Our board responded to a request for donations to their silent auction, and purchased one of Gil Twiest's mounted prints of a Bald Eagle in flight, in addition to 3 of his raptor notecards to contribute to this fundraiser. We are lucky to have such a talented photographer in our midst. Thank you, Gil!



For Bookworms

Some recently published books are available for bird and nature lovers:

- *National Geographic Field Guide to Birds: Pennsylvania* by Jonathan K. Alderfer (Editor) is a paperback which includes birding hotspots and details on bird behavior.
- *Roger Tory Peterson: A Biography* by Douglas Carlson, described as authoritative and highly readable, is available from *Bird Watcher's Digest* or University of Texas Press.
- *Kaufman Field Guide to Insects of North America* by Kenn Kaufman, Eric Eaton is a comprehensive field guide which emphasizes the insects that are most likely to catch our attention but includes information on all groups that can be recognized.
- *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder* by Richard Louv shows that exposure to nature is essential for healthy childhood development, and provides simple ways to bring children back to nature.

It would be wonderful if any of our members would like to read one of these books, or any nature book, and contribute a book review to a future Drummer.



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____
 Address _____
 email _____

JOIN SENECA ROCKS & NATIONAL AUDUBON (ChapterU21)

- New Membership for 1 year \$20
- Renewal Membership for 1 year \$30

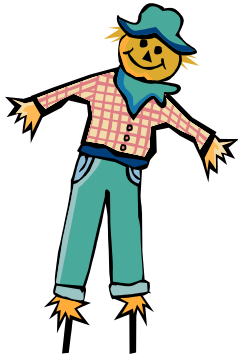
Please make your check payable to: National Audubon Society
 Mail it with this form to: National Audubon Society
 Chapter Membership Data Center
 PO Box 51001
 Boulder, CO 80322-1001

JOIN SENECA ROCKS CHAPTER ONLY

- Membership for 1 year \$10

Please make your check payable to:
 Seneca Rocks Audubon Society
 Mail it with this form to: SRAS
 PO Box 148
 Clarion, PA 16214

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



Looking Ahead

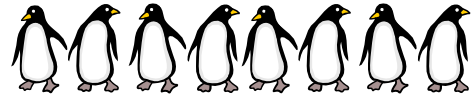
November 12 program -
Sharon Pillar, Global Warming
December 10 - Members' night

Field Trips & Events

Presque Isle Ducks -
November 16
Christmas Bird Count -
December 15

Hosting Upcoming Meetings:

October - Kathy Pokrifka
November - Judy Montgomery
December - Hendrika Bohlen & Mary Emerick
February - Joan Magistrella and Carol Riffer



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Seneca Rocks Audubon Society
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