



# THE DRUMMER



[www.senecarocksaudubon.org](http://www.senecarocksaudubon.org)

November/December, 2008

Volume 25, No. 3

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



## Scott Stoleson presents: Venezuelan Adventure

Scott's talk will present some of the sights and sounds of the Venezuelan llanos (savannahs), where he worked on his graduate research. This unique tropical habitat is home to a great diversity of wildlife, from the very familiar to the downright bizarre, as well as to the distinctive cowboy culture of that country.

Scott H. Stoleson is a Research Wildlife Biologist with the Forest Service's Northern Research Station in Warren, PA. Seven years of studying parrotlet breeding biology in the Venezuelan llanos resulted in Scott's receiving his MS, PhD, and several tropical

parasites. His current research focuses on evaluating the impacts of land management on the distribution, abundance, and demography of vertebrate populations, especially for species of conservation concern (such as the Cerulean Warbler) in the much more benign environment of the Allegheny Plateau of Pennsylvania.

## December meeting – Members' Night & Cookie Exchange

December 8 will be our traditional Members' Night – bring some photos, slides, or anything you would like to share. This meeting is always interesting and fun.

We will also have a cookie exchange -- To participate in the exchange, please package 2 dozen cookies in 4 sets of 6 on plates or in sandwich bags. One set will be opened for our refreshments, another will be set aside for a student. December 8 begins finals week for the students and some homemade cookies will be appreciated. The remaining two sets will be exchanged for two sets of new cookies brought by someone else. If you choose, please include a recipe.

Seneca Rocks Annual Bird Seed Sale -  
Pick up November 11 through 15

## This is a combined November/December Drummer

We have no field trips scheduled.

The Christmas Bird Count will be January 3. Please come to the December 8 meeting or contact Deb regarding your territory. Details for the tally and dinner will also be announced at the December meeting.



### Hosts Needed

If you are able to Host, or help host, a meeting, please check the sign-up sheet at our next meeting and help fill the gaps.

Nov 10 - Judy Montgomery

Dec 8 - Cookie Exchange

Feb 9 - Hendrika Bohlen and Mary Emerick

Mar 9 - open

April 13 - Ruth Schurr and ( looking for another volunteer )

### Project FeederWatch

~Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Ithaca, NY--More than 100 studies have shown that getting closer to nature reduces stress and promotes a feeling of well-being in children and adults. So, filling feeders and counting the birds that visit may be just what the doctor ordered! For more than 20 years, that's what participants in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Project FeederWatch have been doing--benefitting themselves and the birds.

"It is a great winter time activity for the whole family," says Alaska FeederWatcher Nancy Darnell. "If you have children, they will come to love watching the birds. All of this is fun and a chance to contribute to scientific studies, too!"

The 2008-09 season of Project FeederWatch gets underway November 8 and runs through April 3. Participants count the numbers and kinds of birds at their feeders each week and send the information to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Participants submitted more than 115,000 checklists during the 2007-08 FeederWatch season, documenting unusual bird sightings, winter movements, and shifting ranges--a treasure-trove of information that scientists use to monitor the health of the birds and of the environment.

"Being a FeederWatcher is easy and fun, and at the same time helps generate the world's largest database on feeder-bird populations," says project leader David Bonter. "We are grateful for the contributions our participants have made for the birds and are proud of

### Silent Auction Report

Treasurer Janice Horn reports that the Silent Auction at our October meeting netted \$182! Plus fun for all.

We may make this an annual event.

The *Drummer* is the 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 8 times per year – September through December, and February through May.

The *Drummer* is available on our website in color in Adobe pdf and may be read or downloaded from the site – [www.senecarocksaudubon.org](http://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](mailto:fmcguire1@verizon.net).

the joy they say it brings to their busy lives. Since we started in 1987, more than 40,000 people have submitted observations, engaging with the wildlife beyond their windows.”

“Project FeederWatch opened up a whole new world for me,” says participant Cheri Ryan of Lockport, Kentucky. “It’s so interesting to watch the activities of the birds. I learn something new each time I participate.”

Scientists learn something new from the data each year, too, whether it’s about the movements of common backyard birds or unusual sightings of rarely-seen species. Highlights of the most recent season include the largest southward movement of Red-breasted Nuthatches in the history of the project--part of an expected influx of northern birds that fly farther south when their food supplies run short. Other northern species showing up in record numbers included Common Repolls and Pine Siskins. Among the rare birds reported was a Streak-backed Oriole in Loveland, Colorado--the state’s first report of this bird, native to Mexico. A December nor’easter deposited a Dovekie in Newton, Massachusetts, the first time this North Atlantic seabird has ever been reported to Project FeederWatch.

Long-term data show some species increasing in number, such as the Lesser Goldfinch in the Southwest. Other populations continue a downward trend, such as the Evening Grosbeak throughout their range. Once one of the most common species seen at feeders in the northern half of the continent, the grosbeaks are declining for unknown reasons.

Beyond the benefits to birds and science, however, is the benefit to participants. “Nature is not merely an amenity; it is critical to healthy human development and functioning,” says Nancy Wells, Cornell University assistant professor of design and environmental analysis. Her studies find that a view of nature through the window or access to the environment in any way improves a child’s cognitive functioning and reduces the negative effects of stress on the child’s psychological well-being. Wells also notes that when children spent time with nature

early in life it carries over to their adult attitudes and behavior toward the environment.

Project FeederWatch welcomes participants of all ages and skill levels, from scout troops and retirees to classrooms and nature center visitors. To learn more and to sign up, visit <http://www.feederwatch.org> or call the Lab toll-free at (800) 843-2473. In return for the \$15 fee (\$12 for Lab members). Participants receive the FeederWatcher’s Handbook, an identification poster of the most common feeder birds in their area, a calendar, complete instructions, and the FeederWatch annual report, Winter Bird Highlights.

Many FeederWatchers echo this comment from Mary Strasser of Wisconsin: “The greatest reward for me as a participant in Project FeederWatch these many years has been observing birds and behavior that I might have missed had I not been part of this project.”

The top 25 most frequently reported feeder birds, 2007-2008 in Pennsylvania were:

- Mourning Dove
- Carolina/Black-capped Chickadee
- Dark-eyed Junco
- Northern Cardinal
- Tufted Titmouse
- Downy Woodpecker
- American Goldfinch
- White-breasted Nuthatch
- Blue Jay
- House Finch
- Red-bellied Woodpecker
- American Robin
- Carolina Wren
- Song Sparrow
- White-throated Sparrow
- European Starling
- House Sparrow
- Hairy Woodpecker
- American Crow
- Common Grackle
- Red-breasted Nuthatch
- Brown-headed Cowbird
- Red-winged Blackbird
- Purple Finch
- Cooper’s Hawk

## 2009 Calendar Sales - Orders Needed

In order for the calendar sales to be a fundraiser, we need to have pre-orders for 25 calendars. As of the October program, only 7 calendars have been pre-ordered. The November 10 program will be the last chance to pre-order. The calendars will be \$10 each. Be sure to check out the beautiful photographs and themes that these calendars offer at our next program.

### Wings, Sand, and Song: Presque Isle's Habitat

Nature DVD for Sale

Presque Isle Audubon Society (PIAS) contracted to have a film produced in conjunction with their Festival of the Birds. Tracy Graziano, owner of Moonfire Productions, did the filming. She and her husband/helper, Ben Koncewicz, captured the various habitats and occupants of Presque Isle State Park throughout the year.

"Wings, Sand and Song" journeys through the unique habitats of Presque Isle during all four seasons to view some of the most intimate moments of bird life: watch a Yellow Warbler build her nest, a Killdeer clutch hatch and take their first steps, Baltimore Oriole fledglings fed by their parents and a multitude of other species who call Presque Isle State Park their home - either for a brief moment during migration or all year long.

PIAS has a number of these 70 minute DVDs available at the Nature Shop at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center at a cost of \$15. If you would like one mailed, please add \$5.95 for shipping. Make checks payable to "Presque Isle Audubon Society" and send to Presque Isle Audubon Society, Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Drive, Suite 8, Erie, PA 16505. For more information, see their website at <http://www.presqueisle.org/audubon/>.



### Good Sighting

Ruth Schurr reports a good sighting the last week of October at the Gravel Lick bridge: Ed Spindler, who lives on the hill near there saw five Bald Eagles "playing", diving and calling over the Clarion River near the bridge. There is a confirmed nest downstream from there. It is newsworthy to see that many eagles at one place.

### Cook Forest Clear Creek State Parks to form a Friends Group

Have you ever wanted to make a difference in your community but you didn't know how? Well here is an idea, join the Friends of the Cook Forest Clear Creek State Park Complex! As a member you could help in a variety of ways including fund raising, park projects, event hosting and more. Friends Groups are also a great way to meet new people while helping a good cause. To find out more please join us at the Gateway Lodge in Cooksburg on November 20th at 6:30pm for our inaugural Friends Group meeting.

If you would like more information about the Friends Group or if you need directions to the Gateway Lodge please call Sean Benson at (814) 744-8407 or (814) 752-2368.

From Audubon Action...

## **GREAT LAKES COMPACT SIGNED BY PRESIDENT**

\*Good News!\* On October 3, shortly after Congress approved the Great Lakes Compact by an overwhelming majority, President Bush signed the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact, endorsing sweeping protections for the Great Lakes that culminate a decade's worth of work by Audubon and other conservation organizations, government agencies, businesses, the public, as well as countless local, state, and federal leaders.

The Great Lakes Compact is a landmark international agreement that will prevent mass export to water-thirsty states in the Southwest as well as foreign nations around the globe. The Great Lakes contain more than 90% of the fresh surface water in the United States, and 20% of the world's supply. However, scientists estimate that only 1% is naturally replenished by rain, snow melt, and groundwater each year. The Compact will help protect this one-time gift of the glaciers.

## **PROTECTING HAWAIIAN SONG BIRDS**

Audubon is working to protect Hawaiian song birds at risk of extinction. We are joining Hawaii Audubon and Sierra Club to compel Hawaii's Department of Natural Resources to live up to its commitment to protect Palilas' critical habitat from grazing sheep and goats. If action is not taken immediately, Palilas could go extinct in five years. Two other Hawaiian birds, Akekees and Akikikis, are also experiencing dramatic population declines. We will be filing comments to support listing these species as endangered. The proposal to list these birds and 46 other Hawaiian species was published in the Federal

Register on October 22. Comments are due December 22.

## **HOUSE PASSES NO CHILD LEFT INSIDE ACT**

\*Good News!\* Environmental education received a major boost on September 19th, when the House approved the No Child Left Inside Act of 2008 by a vote of 293-109. The legislation would authorize major new funding for states to provide high-quality, environmental instruction. Funds would support outdoor learning activities both at school and in non-formal environmental education centers, teacher training, and the creation of state environmental literacy plans.

## **THE POWER OF YOUR VOTE**

Could there be a person alive in the U.S. who is not aware of the national election? We doubt it.

But it's certain that many citizens eligible to vote stayed home on election day. For presidential year elections held between 1960-1995 in the 37 countries with free elections, the U.S. was at the bottom with 54% voter turnout, tied with Switzerland. Only Poland suffers lower turnout at 51%.

## **TREATY TO PROTECT SEABIRDS**

President Bush has sent the Agreement for the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) to the Senate for approval. These seabirds are threatened by accidental deaths in longline and trawl fisheries, and loss of eggs and chicks to introduced predators on breeding islands. ACAP is an international treaty to address these threats. Audubon and Birdlife International have been instrumental in shepherding the package through the process. Now, the Senate must vote on the treaty and Congress must pass laws to implement the agreement.



## Hickory Grove Elementary School in Brookville Wins Waste Watcher Award

**H**ickory Grove Elementary School has received a 2007 PA Waste Watcher Award for Outstanding Achievement in School Recycling, Composting and Public Education. Principal Ray Puller and teachers Ann Fritz, John MacBeth and Jason Brinkley are recognized for their roles in building a school-wide recycling program. The school's students, faculty and staff voluntarily recycle lunch food waste, paper, cardboard, plastic bottles, aluminum cans, newspapers and magazines.

The recycling program grew remarkably in 2001 when the school district received a grant through the Department of Education to construct five 4' x 4' worms bins to compost lunch food waste. The students were taught how to separate their leftover food waste and feed it to the worms each day. In 2006, over 718 pounds of food waste was composted rather than being sent to the landfill. They project they will compost 1 ton of food waste in the current school year.

The Jefferson County Solid Waste Authority provided recycling grant funds from the Department of Environmental Protection to purchase collection containers for recycling plastic bottles and paper. The students collect over 75 pounds of plastic bottles and over 580 pounds of paper every two weeks. Including the other materials the school recycles, they project they will recycle more than 16 tons of recyclable materials during this school year.

In addition to the grant funds that were used to start the program, the success of the program belongs to all the students, faculty and staff who wholeheartedly recycle while at school. Their success can be carried throughout the surrounding Brookville community.

The PA Waste Watcher Award program recognizes municipalities, schools, community groups, businesses and individuals in Pennsylvania who demonstrate that their recycling and waste management efforts are above and beyond normal activities. The Professional Recyclers of PA (PROP), the Pennsylvania Waste Industries Association (PWIA) and the Keystone Chapter of the Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA) sponsor this award.

**CONTACT:** Principal Ray Puller  
Hickory Grove Elementary School  
104 Jenks Street  
Brookville, PA 15825  
814-849-8112

*Editor's Note: Organic fertilizer (worm castings from the students' vermicomposting project) is available at the school in 1 or 4 pound bags at a cost of \$2 or \$7 respectively. Proceeds benefit the students.*

## Bird-window Collisions Citizen-science

Dr. Daniel Klem, Jr., of Muhlenberg University in Allentown, PA, has been studying bird-window collisions for many years. He is THE expert on the subject, and the winner of the 2008 PSO Conservation Award for this work. As a citizen-science effort, we are including a form on page 7 that you may use to report a window collision. Note that the scientists are interested in data for all bird-window collisions, whether the bird is killed, stunned, or its fate unknown.

You may print more copies (pdf) or use an on-line version of this report form at <http://www.muhlenberg.edu/depts/biology/faculty/klem/ACO/GlassHome.htm>.

**DATA SHEET FOR BIRD-WINDOW COLLISION**

**Send to:** Acopian Center for Ornithology  
 Department of Biology  
 Muhlenberg College  
 2400 Chew Street  
 Allentown, Pa 18104  
 ACO@MUHLENBERG.EDU  
 Fax. 484-664-3509

Please fill in as many details as possible: minimally species name, location, and date are needed.

(FOR INTERNAL USE)

Cat # \_\_\_\_\_

Tally # \_\_\_\_\_

**Species Common Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Scientific Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Strike:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Age:** Adult Juvenile Unknown **Sex:** Male Female Unknown

**Result:** Killed Stunned Unknown **If stunned**, how long before flying off \_\_\_\_\_ (min).

**Time of Strike** (if known): \_\_\_\_\_ **Height above ground of strike:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Evidence:** Any feathers, body fluid, or patterns left on glass? \_\_\_\_\_

**Window Type:** Picture Bay Patio Door Multi-Paned Single-Paned Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Size of window:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Additional Details:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Area is:** Urban Rural Suburban **Additional Details:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Habitat type facing window:** Wooded Field Yard w/trees and shrubs Open lawn area Other

**Additional Details:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Bird Feeders near window:** Yes No **Additional Details:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Is the window:** Reflective or Transparent **15. Vegetation near window** (house plants inside or out, bushes): Yes No

**Location of strike:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**County/Prov.** \_\_\_\_\_ **State & Post Code** \_\_\_\_\_ **Country** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contributors Information (if different from above): Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**County/Prov.** \_\_\_\_\_ **State & Post Code** \_\_\_\_\_ **Country** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail address:** \_\_\_\_\_

For more information about our chapter and current updates, please check our website at [www.senecarocksaudubon.org](http://www.senecarocksaudubon.org).

Don't forget to order a beautiful Audubon calendar (or 2) at our next meeting. They will be available in December and make great gifts. These are offered at \$10 each, which includes a small donation to the chapter.

Hosting upcoming meetings...

Nov - Judy Montgomery

Dec - Cookie Exchange

Mark your calendar -  
This Year's  
Christmas Bird Count  
Will be January 3, 2009



### SRAS Board Members

President --	None	
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
Education -	Paulette Colantonio	797-2031
History -	Pat Conway	849-6315
Mill Creek Coalition -		
Beaver Creek -	Walter Fye	797-1019

### Future Programs...

December -

Members' Night and Cookie Exchange

Feb & March - to be determined

April - Marcia Bonta

Clarion, PA 16214

P.O. Box 148

Seneca Rocks Audubon Society