



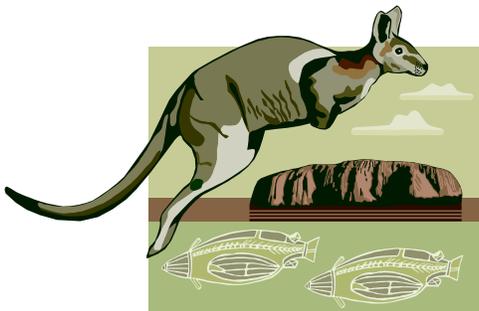
# THE DRUMMER

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



April, 2007

Volume 23, No. 6



## AUSTRALIA

Next Meeting – April 9  
Room 150, Becker Hall

Social – 6:30 p.m. Program begins at 7:00 p.m.

Come to the April meeting and experience Spring “Downunder” with Naturalist Gary Ferrence. His program will consist of a slide-illustrated lecture featuring many birds common to Australia and New Zealand. Consideration will be given to other aspects of the natural history of these wonderful lands ranging from kangaroos and water dragons to wildflowers, the grand barrier reef, thermal features, and native culture.

Dr. Ferrence is a retired biologist from Indiana, Pennsylvania.



## Presque Isle Field Trip

by Jim Wilson

Seneca Rocks Audubon Society will meet at Presque Isle State Park for a spring migrant field trip

Saturday, April 14, 2007 at 9:00 A.M.

(note date change since last advertised)

Mike Leahy, Leader

We meet inside Presque Isle Park in Erie. It is approx. 100 miles from Clarion by way of Meadville. From Clarion, take Rt. 322 West to Interstate 79 at Meadville. At the end of I-79 in Erie, take Rt. 20 West (26th St.) to Rt. 832 North, which becomes Peninsula Drive. There is a McDonalds on the right after you cross Rt. 5. Our meeting place (Vista one Parking Lot) is a large parking lot on the right about a mile after you see the Presque Isle State Park sign. It is the first obvious place to scope Presque Isle Bay.

Spring migration at Presque Isle is best in March/April. It is usually windy on Presque Isle, and the weather can change quickly. Dress for early spring weather.

Last year 67 species were tallied on this outing – the most exciting find was Little Gull,

a European species that has recently and rarely been found nesting around the upper Great Lakes. You won't want to miss this trip – anything can turn up!

**Restaurants** – There are a number of restaurants along Peninsula Drive and East on both Rt. 5 and 20. Also, at Mill Creek Mall and the interchange with I-90 and Peach Street, you will find a wide range of restaurants.

**Restrooms** – Most restrooms in the park will probably be closed. The park office, the Stull Interpretive Center and the boat launch restrooms should be open. If not, there is McDonalds on the way in. ☘☘



## The Drumming Log

by President Deb Freed

**T**he Drumming Log is our designated perch for the chapter president. It has been challenging at times to write a column. Sometimes my inspiration comes from walking with my dogs and sometimes from being out with other birders. After five years, two terms plus an extra year, I'm running out of steam. (This is one reason that sticking to a term of two years makes good sense.)

The future leadership of our chapter is on my mind right now. We currently have a very active and productive team of officers and committee chair people who get things done. It is a fine group of people who share the load

with amazing cooperation and reliability. I'd like to thank Janice Horn, Dennis Beaver, Ron Montgomery, Flo McGuire, Jim Wilson, Gary Edwards and Jan Meyer. In addition, I appreciate those members who have hosted our meetings and picnics, invited us to their camps and homes for birding activities and those who step forward to help with our annual events. I am aware that several members have recently stepped down from many years of service, notably Margaret Buckwalter and Walter Fye. I am grateful that they remain members we can call upon for historical perspective and tap their lifelong birding experiences. Many other members have cycled through leadership roles over the last 22 years and it is their work that we continue.

We are presenting the following people on a slate for election at our April meeting: President - open, Vice President - Pete Dalby, Secretary - Deb Freed and Treasurer - Janice Horn. These officers will begin their terms July 1, 2007.

In July, the chapter officers and other chapter leaders will meet to plan for the 2007-2008-program year. The team will work without a president to make sure that next year will provide interesting programs, sponsor a variety of educational activities, participate in bird surveys and conservation initiatives, and continue our work on the Breeding Bird Atlas. We will examine the reasons we sponsor events like the Birdathon and direct our resources in support of our mission.

I don't know what my inspiration will be for the May Drummer. It's bound to have something to do with spring, a birder's favorite season. After that, this perch will be held open for our next president. As our wonderful new brochure asks, "Care to join us?" We'd love to have you. ☘☘

## ***Cook Forest Big Tree Extravaganza Saturday—4/21/07***

by Dale Luthringer



*Cook Forest State Park, in conjunction with the Eastern Native Tree Society (ENTS), will host a series of free events open to the public focusing on the old growth forests of Cook Forest and the Eastern United States. Join forest scientists and naturalists as we learn the latest and most accurate*

*methods to measure tall and noteworthy trees.*

*Watch as a team of scientists climb to the top of the **Seneca Hemlock** to confirm its height and trunk dimensions. Last documented at 12ft circumference breast height x 146.5ft high, it is the **tallest known Eastern Hemlock in the entire Northeastern United States!***

*Events during the day will explore the Park's biodiversity, aesthetics, natural and human history, and importance as a National Natural Landmark. Programs to be conducted during the day as follows:*

8:00am-8:15am - **Opening Remarks** by Robert Leverett (co-founder and Executive Director of ENTS) and Dale Luthringer (Environmental Education Specialist Cook Forest State Park) at the Log Cabin Inn Environmental Learning Classroom.

8:15am-10:15am - **'Dendromorphometry: The New Discipline of Measuring Trees'** by Robert Leverett, and other ENTS certified tree measurers, at the Log Cabin Inn Environmental Learning Classroom. Learn about traditional base-line methods and problems as well as the latest ENTS measuring methods & techniques used to document tall and noteworthy trees.

10:30am-1:00pm - **'Searching for the Giants: Seneca Forest Special Management Area'** by Dale Luthringer, Robert Leverett, and other ENTS

certified tree measurers. Moderate interpretive hike to search for new big/tall tree records and re-measure old champions. We will meet at the Log Cabin Inn Environmental Learning Classroom then car-pool a short distance to the Hemlock Trail trailhead on Forest Rd. The Davies Black Cherry, tallest known in the Northeastern U.S., Ridge Trail American Beech, tallest known in Pennsylvania, and the Camp Trail Hemlock 2nd largest hemlock in the park, will be just some of the trees we will see on this trek.

1:00pm-1:30pm—**LUNCH** (please bring a lunch)

1:30pm-4:00pm - **'Tsuga Search Trunk**

**Modeling & Climb of the Seneca Hemlock'** by Will Blozan (ISA certified arborist, ENTS President & co-founder, Tsuga Search Project Director) and other certified ENTS measurers. Please meet at the Park Office to begin the moderate hike to the Seneca Hemlock along the Seneca Trail. The latest ground based volume measurement techniques will be compared with the most accurate tape drop method.

4:00pm-6:00pm - **DINNER** (Please enjoy dinner at one of our local area restaurants.)

6:00pm-6:05pm - **Evening Lecture Series**

**Opening Remarks** -- Dale Luthringer and Robert Leverett; all evening programs at Sawmill Theater.

6:05pm-6:55pm - **'The GIST of Mapping Old Growth Forests'** Gary Beluzo - Professor of Environmental Science, Holyoke Community College.

6:55pm-7:45pm - **'Pennsylvania Old Growth Forest Restoration Project'** Scott Bearer -forest ecologist, The Nature Conservancy in Pennsylvania.

7:45pm-8:00pm - **BREAK** (coffee, tea, hot chocolate provided)

8:00pm-8:50pm - **'Seventy-two Years of Change in the Vegetation Composition of Hearts Content Scenic Area'** Todd Ristau - research ecologist, Allegheny National Forest.

8:50pm-9:40pm - **'Human vs. Natural Disturbance in Northern Hardwood, Hemlock and White Pine Forests'** Dr. Lee Frelich - Director Hardwood Ecology, University of Minnesota.

For more information on this and other programs, contact the park office at (814) 744-8407.

## BUZZARD SWAMP OUTING



Daniel S. Kilby

The Todd Bird Club from Indiana, PA will join us on an outing to Buzzard Swamp on Saturday, April 28. Meet at the parking lot at 8:00 am.

Take Rt. 66 north to the main intersection in Marienville, where six roads meet. Turn right just before the Bucktail Hotel, and follow this road for 1.2 miles. (You will pass the post office on your left.)

There will be a brown sign for Buzzard Swamp on the

right; turn left. From here it is 2.9 miles to the parking lot. This level three to four mile hike passes through hedgerows, fields, water, and woods.

There is also the possibility of mudflats, so, as you can imagine, the birds may be quite diverse.

Plan to wear an orange hat or vest, as spring gobbler season begins that day.

## BEAVER CREEK BANQUET

The Alliance for Wetlands and Wildlife will be holding the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Beaver Creek Banquet on Thursday, May 3, 2007 at the Traditions Banquet Center in Shippenville. Tickets are \$40 each, by advanced sale only. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. and soft drinks, hors D'oeuvres and a salad bar will be available during the social time. Dinner will be served at 7:00 p.m. There will be raffle tickets for sale, with a special offer to Early Birds (registration postmarked by April 23).

Send reservation to Alliance for Wetlands & Wildlife, 22830 Route 68, Clarion, PA, 16214. You may call 226-7880, or contact Walter Fye at 797-1019 for more information or a registration form.



## Oil Creek Outdoors – June 9, 2007

by Dennis Beaver

This new event can present a tremendous opportunity to publicize Seneca Rocks Audubon Society. Through the Pennsylvania Parks and Forest Foundation, funds became available to create 14,000 rack cards to advertise this event throughout the Commonwealth. "Oil Creek Outdoors" will appear in the event calendar of *Pennsylvania Magazine*. SRAS needs a small Event Team to participate in what can be a very large event. This team will decide how to have SRAS participate.

This is also an event that SRAS members and their families will want to attend. There are clinics and programs, and hands-on activities for the entire family. There will be fly fishing demonstrations, geocaching, a scavenger hunt, blacksmith demonstrations, a clinic on nature journaling, guided bike rides, children's games, a clinic about tent pitching, backpacking, sleeping bag stuffing. Smokey the Bear will even be there, and the Cornplanter Fire Department will be selling food. There will be demonstrations about bike repair, a clinic on Dutch oven cooking, and information on canoeing and kayaking. Nightfall will find participants gathering around a campfire with a storyteller. This should be an excellent opportunity for SRAS to meet the public, and provide information about birding. Save the date, and volunteer to help.

## REMINDER

The Birdathon, SRAS' biggest fundraiser, will take place between May 5 and May 13. Choose your day (24 hour period) and start contacting potential sponsors soon.



*Western Scrub-jay by Kirsten Munson*

## BIRDS FOUND TO PLAN FUTURE MEALS

*Courtesy University of Cambridge and World Science staff*

Are humans the only beings that plan for the future? A new study on western scrub-jays, published in the Feb. 22 issue of the research journal *Nature*, provides food for thought.

Each morning, eight scrub-jays were let into one of two compartments: either with breakfast, or without. They were then fed for the rest of the day.

After several days, the birds were also given pine nuts suitable for caching in the evening. In anticipation of a morning without breakfast, the scrub-jays consistently hid food in the “no breakfast” rather than the “breakfast” compartment, showing a rather detailed understanding of future needs, according to the researchers, Nicky Clayton and colleagues at the University of Cambridge, U.K.

In a second experiment, the birds received for breakfast either dog food in one compartment, or peanuts in a second. When they were allowed to cache either food at will in the evenings, they moved to ensure a varied future diet: they hoarded peanuts in the dog food compartment and dog kibble in the peanut chamber, the researchers said.

The behavior “shows they are concerned both about guarding against food shortages and maximizing the variety of their diets in the future,” Clayton said. “It suggests they have advanced and complex thought

processes as they have a sophisticated concept of past, present and future, and factor this into their planning.” Researchers believe this is the first example of future planning in animals other than humans.



## NATIONAL WILDLIFE WEEK AT THE CLARION MALL

Thursday through Saturday, April 26-28, many local wildlife organizations, including SRAS, will be celebrating National Wildlife Week with displays at the Clarion Mall. Jim Wilson has built some nest boxes which will be offered for sale. We will have a variety of interesting items and information for nature lovers, and our new SRAS brochures. Volunteers are needed for our display. Please contact Deb Freed or sign up at the April meeting.

*Atlassing Tip: Look for broken white egg shells on the ground to confirm Mourning Dove, often before the May 1 safe date.*

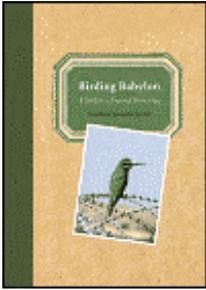
## Birding Festival

The First Annual Oil Region Birding Festival will be held Thursday through Saturday, May 10-12, 2007, at Cross Creek Resort, Titusville, PA. Field trips on Friday and Saturday mornings include bus trips, float trips, and bird walks at a variety of locations; several afternoon programs will be offered, geared to the beginning and intermediate birder. The “Birder’s Banquet”, featuring keynote speaker nature artist and author Julie Zickefoose, will be held at 6:00 pm on Saturday. Registration forms will be available at our meetings, or contact the Oil Region Alliance at 814-677-3152 or 800-483-6264.

*Did you guess? The young naturalist in our March issue is Pat Conway.*

# Birding Babylon

by Carmen T. Santasania



*Note – this article was reprinted from the PSO Pileated with permission.*

*Birding Babylon*<sup>1</sup> is a short book based on Jonathan Trouern-Trend's year of service in Iraq where he served as a National

Guardsman from Connecticut's 118<sup>th</sup> Area Support Medical Battalion. The book is taken from a blog, <http://birdingbabylon.blogspot.com/>, set up by Trouern-Trend while in Iraq.

Trouern-Trend began his tour in Iraq in early 2004. Sergeant First Class Jon Trouern-Trend has been a birder since age 12; so naturally he looked for birds – and found them in surprising number and variety around Anaconda Base in the Sunni Triangle where he was stationed: old-world warblers near the laundry pond, kestrels at the dump, Wood Pigeons by the airstrip, owls on the cement bunkers. And whenever he got "outside the wire" – collecting water samples from the Tigris, delivering supplies to school children, at a forward operating base in Mosul, or on a trek to the ruins of ancient Babylon – his lifelist grew longer.

From nearly the day he arrived until he left Iraq, Trouern-Trend wrote about his sightings in an on-line journal, which attracted thousands of readers and was excerpted in the press. Now some of the highlights of his *Birding Babylon* blog are collected in a small book designed to resemble a birder's journal. In the preface, the author looks back on his experience and ahead to what the future might hold for the rooks, doves, storks, bulbul, and sparrows of Iraq, and for its people.

This little book cuts through the politics of war like bird song, reminding us of our imperishable connection with nature; of how birds and their journeys tie the world together; of the persistence of life even in a wasted land.

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**From *Birding Babylon*:**

March 18, 2004

On our convoy up from Kuwait we had to stop because one of the Humvees had a flat. We all piled out of the vehicles and set up a defensive perimeter with our weapons pointing out. It was a bit of a surreal scene, because as I'm lying on the ground with my eye on some guy racing around in a pickup truck, wondering if he's going to take a potshot at us . . . a pair of Crested Larks was not even ten feet from me, the male displaying and dancing around.

August 31, 2004

. . . The next morning I birded in the ruins of Babylon proper. An Iraq Babbler sat obligingly on a fence for a few minutes before diving into the reeds. In the same area I saw a few young White-cheeked Bulbuls that were just fledging. A pond near an amphitheater from Alexander the Great's time had a Black-crowned Night-Heron, a few Little Egrets, Pied Kingfishers, and Black-winged Stilts...I really enjoyed the lush surroundings, the birds, and the history of Babylon, not to mention that this base is much safer than mine – it almost never gets attacked.

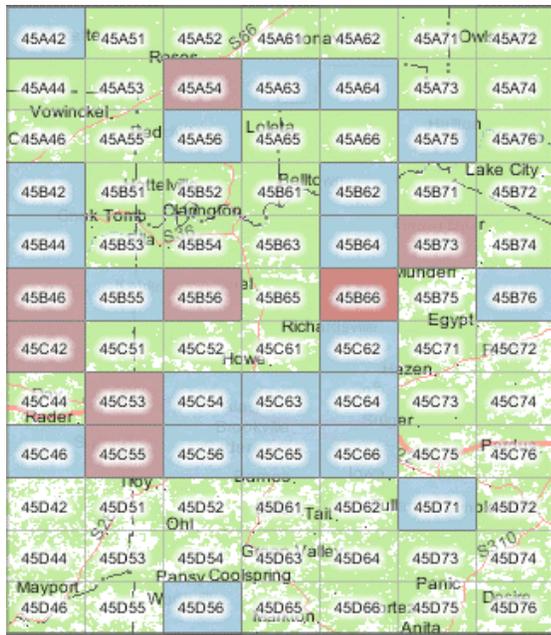
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The blog posts themselves are fascinating and good reading. They really made me search the internet for the birds he was describing.

Jonathan Trouern-Trend currently works for the American Red Cross Blood Services in their Epidemiology and Surveillance program. He lives in Marlborough, Connecticut, with his wife and their five children.

You can read the blog posts at <http://birdingbabylon.blogspot.com/>. Or you can purchase the book for \$10 at most bookstores or on-line.

<sup>1</sup> Much of this article was based on book reviews and the actual blog postings from Iraq.



**Region 45 map** – the pink (or darkest) blocks are complete; the blue (medium gray) blocks are adopted; the green (lightest) blocks are available. Any block ending in “6” is a priority block.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas is For The Birds!

### BBA Plans - Region 45, Season Four, 2007

by Pat Conway

Spring is here and the migrants are on their way back to the States to thrill us with their brilliant colors and joyful songs for yet another breeding season. These beautiful winged creatures need our help in completing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas.

The focus for Region 45 this year will be to complete priority block 6’s on page 45 of *The Delorme Atlas*. There are 16 blocks altogether. Three of these blocks are complete, which leaves 13 yet to go. Some blocks have data, some don’t.

I believe our blockbusting efforts worked well last year with the participation of Seneca Rocks birders. I would like to continue this to some degree in June and July when most of the birds are considered “safe” or breeding in the state. A schedule for

blockbusting Block 6’s in Region 45 will be forthcoming in the May *Drummer*.

I would also like to encourage all of you to bird wherever you go this summer in Region 45 and any other region. All of the regions need data. If we don’t have data we can’t enter it. Put some field cards in your car, take your atlas and bird wherever you can and when you can. There are many blocks with no data and some blocks with little data. If you go on a shopping trip, to the dentist, anywhere in an unowned block (see map below), take your Atlas and field cards, pick a block and bird it. You might get twenty species. That’s twenty species in a block that may not have any data and it will be counted as a percentage for that block. Every effort counts!

Any help you give to the Atlas Project is appreciated and very important. I can’t stress this enough. Don’t worry about entering your data. If you don’t have a computer, the coordinators, or Powdermill, will see that your data gets entered. Remember we’re doing this for the birds!

Thanks to all of you for your continued support. Let’s go get em!

### Region 44

Carole Willenpart would also like to do some Blockbusting in Region 44. These outings were a lot of fun last year, and one of our photos is featured in the current BBA newsletter, the *PennsylvAvian Monitor*. Stay tuned for dates!

### Region 46 Blockbusting

by Jocelynn Smrekar

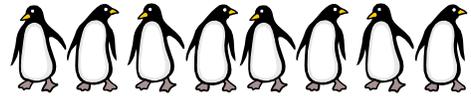
We will meet at 7:00 a.m. and divvy up the block. Bird until 12:00 noon then we reunite, eat (packed) lunch and gather the day’s sightings. Maps and field cards provided. Possible Days are June 4-8, June 15-18, June 20, June 22-25, June 27, June 29-30, July 1-7, July 8-14, July 22-28, and July 29-31.

Can you or someone you know help? For starting locations, contact Jocelynn Smrekar, RC 46 at (814) 583-5110.



## Some Upcoming Activities

Presque Isle - April 14  
 National Wildlife Week - April 26-28  
 Buzzard Swamp Outing - April 28  
 Oil Creek Warbler Walk - May 5  
 Birdathon - May 5 thru 13  
 Oil Region Birding Festival - May 10 - 12  
 PA Migration Count - May 12  
 PSO meeting in Harrisburg - May 18-20  
 Piney Tract Outing - May 26  
 Grassland Seminar - June 1  
 Oil Creek Outdoors - June 9  
 Atlas Blockbusting - dates in June and July



## SRAS Board Members

<u>Deb Freed</u> , President, Membership	226-4719
<u>Gary Edwards</u> , Vice-president, Programs	676-3011
<u>Dennis Beaver</u> , Secretary/Publicity	676-6564
<u>Janice Horn</u> , Treasurer, Birdseed, Birdathon	226-7367
<u>Flo McGuire</u> , Website, Drummer Editor	755-3672
<u>Jim Wilson</u> , Events, Field Trips	676-5455
<u>Ron Montgomery</u> , Community Programs	764-6088
<u>Paulette Colantonio</u> , Education	797-2031
<u>Pat Conway</u> , History	849-6315
OPEN - Mill Creek Coalition	
<u>Walter Fye</u> , Beaver Creek	797-1019



## Hosts for Upcoming Meetings:

April 9 - Carol Riffer & Joan Magistrella  
 May 14 - Carl & Joan Rowe

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