

Seneca Rocks Drummer



April, 2004
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Newsletter of the Seneca Rocks Audubon Society

Volume 20, No. 7

www.senecarocksaudubon.org

Next Meeting – April 12
Peirce Science Center Auditorium
Refreshments & conversation at 7:00 p.m.
Program begins at 7:30 p.m.



APRIL PROGRAM – ALASKA WITH GIL & LINDA

by Gary Edwards, Program Chairman

In the summer of 2003 Gil and Linda Twiest drove their motorhome to Alaska to photograph Canadian and Alaskan wildlife, especially birds. The April program will be about their trip. Gil was successful in photographing most of the large, and many of the small, mammals that live in the Land of the Midnight Sun. He also photographed many birds, including Bald Eagles. These will be shown along with

some of the wildflowers that were in bloom during June and July. Of course, other aspects such as Alaskan fishing, the solstice party in Fairbanks, glaciers, mountains, bays, and other scenes of Alaska were observed and will be part of the presentation. In addition, various aspects of the Al-Can highway will be shown and discussed. If you have ever wanted to go to Alaska, come and see how easy it is to make the trip.

Field Trips

by Ron Montgomery

As discussed at our meeting of March 8, I have changed our Conneaut Marsh trip from Saturday, March 27 to Sunday, March 28, and the beginning of the Woodcock Watch from April 15 to April 1. I changed the Conneaut Marsh trip because Bob Mulvihill recently scheduled a meeting of the Atlas Coordinators for March 27 and Mike, who will lead our Marsh Trip, will attend the Atlas Meeting. I changed the beginning of the Woodcock Watch because Bob Mulvihill recently changed the Woodcock safe date from April 15 to April 1.

Sunday March 28; Conneaut Marsh. Mike has agreed to lead this trip as he has done so ably in the past. The caravan will leave Shelly's

Restaurant parking lot at 7:30AM; Hirsch Meats at 7:45; and Cranberry Mall at 8:00. We will eat lunch in a restaurant, but you will be home in time for dinner. Our first stop will be at the bridge just north of Custards off Route 285 so you can catch-up with us there. If you would like to join us later in the day, call Mike to arrange a place & time. Feel free to invite guests, but warn them that the weather can be unpredictable. If you have a two-way radio, you may wish to bring it to this and the next field trip.

Saturday April 3; Presque Isle. We will meet inside Presque Isle Park in Erie at 9:00 (it is 100 miles and 2 hours from Clarion by way of Custards, Rt 79, Rt 20 and Peninsula Drive). Our meeting place is on the right about a mile inside the Park. It is the first obvious place to scope the Lake and you cannot miss it. Mike, our intrepid duck guide, will meet us there and lead the outing. We will have lunch in a restaurant and bird until late afternoon, but folks can leave anytime they wish. On our exploratory trip there last year, we had a red-headed woodpecker! Please arrange appropriate carpooling.

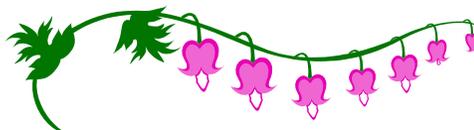
April 1 - 30; Woodcock Watch. Birders are encouraged to go to as many places as possible, especially on pp 44 and 45 of the PA Gazetteer, in search of breeding Woodcock. Record your observations on the sheets that I passed out at our last meeting (additional forms can be downloaded from our web site). Bring your preliminary observations to our April meeting, but you may choose to continue observing all month. Use the Gazetteer and Block Finder to identify the location of your observation or simply describe the location well enough that we can figure it out. To practice your location skills see if you can confirm that my Atlas address is 45C42 and Deb's is 44C41.

Observations in blocks on page 44 of the Gazetteer will be collected by Mike and those on page 45 will be collected by Pat. Mike and Pat will summarize the findings in a future Newsletter.

Monday, April 26. Warbler Walk at Oil Creek State Park. We will meet Gary at Oil Creek State Park at 8:30am for a Warbler Walk. You can find our starting point by going north on Route 8 out of Oil City, through Rouseville. The Park entrance is on the right about a mile north of Rouseville, immediately after you cross Oil Creek. We will meet at the picnic area parking lot on the right, which is less than a mile into the Park. We will be through before noon. This was a very productive outing last spring.

Saturday, May 1. Warbler Walk at Conemaugh Floodlands, Indiana County. The Todd Bird Club will host this outing. Although there will be substantial walking, the pace will be modest and we will stay on good-quality level trails. Our caravan will form at the Exit 70 Shell/Keystone Truck Stop Parking Lot under the large Restaurant sign (where we met for the Hawk Watch last fall); we'll leave at 7:00AM and return by mid-to-late afternoon. I will have details at our April meeting.

(Continued on next page)



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President	Deb Freed	226-4719
Vice-President	Gary Edwards	676-3011
Secretary	OPEN	
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Mill Ck/Piney Tract ..	Pete Dalby	782-3227
Newsletter	Flo McGuire	755-3672
Programs	Gary Edwards	676-3011

Saturday, May 22. Grassland Birds at Piney Tract. Our last normal field trip of the season is to Piney Tract with the Todd Bird Club of Indiana County. Since the Todd Group has a substantial drive, we may not start until 8:30 or so (stay tuned). SRAS members will still meet at the top of the hill as you enter Piney Tract by way of Exit 53 (old exit 7) off Route 80 and then Canoe Ripple Bridge over the Clarion River. We will certainly finish this aspect of the outing by noon, but our visitors may wish to do something else while they are here. Put the date on your calendar and stay tuned for details.

SRAS 20 Year Celebration May 10 at Timberwolf - Reservations due May 1

Directions:

Timberwolf Lodge is located off route 66 and sits on the west bank of the Clarion River.



From exit 60 on I-80 (old exit 8) travel north along route 66 to Charles Tool. Turn right onto Doe Run Road, and then turn right onto McClain Watson Road. Timberwolf Lodge is 1.3 miles ahead.

From Marianne Corners (routes 322 and 66) travel south on route 66 to Charles Tool and turn left onto Doe Run Road, then turn right onto McClain Watson Road.

Timberwolf Lodge is 1.3 miles ahead. The pavement turns to dirt and takes you down to the parking lot just above the river. A printed map will be available at the April meeting. Send the reservation form on the back of the Drummer with your dinner preference to Deb Freed by May 1.

Crow's Nest

by President Deb Freed

This is the time of year when our field trips pick up a burst of speed as we round the bend and head for the home stretch. For birders, early spring is like a race to get to all the places we hope to see the migrating birds. Some stay to breed, others are passing through. If you join us on the field trips you're sure to see many familiar birds and there is great satisfaction knowing these birds have returned safely. The carrot in this race is the possibility of an unusual sighting. We hope you will mark the trips on your calendar and bring a friend.

Annual PSO Meeting

The Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology (PSO) is looking for people like you. This group was a by-product of the first Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas project, in the 1980's. For 20 years the PSO has published "Pennsylvania Birds", a quarterly journal of articles, photos and records of bird abundance and distribution throughout the state. Members also receive an informative quarterly newsletter, and have the opportunity to meet other Pennsylvania birders at the annual membership meeting. Birders of all skill levels are welcome to join!

The annual meeting is held in a different location each year, on the 3rd weekend in May. The meeting offers field trips led by local birders on Saturday and Sunday mornings, programs on Saturday afternoon, and a banquet with a keynote speaker on Saturday evening.

This year's meeting will be held on May 14-16 at Montour Preserve, near Danville, just off exit 224 of I-80. Please see their website at www.pabirds.org or contact a PSO member for more information. (Ron, Gary, Mike, Margaret, Walter, Flo)

SRAS has offered and been accepted to **host next year's PSO meeting in Clarion on May 20-22, 2005.** The board has begun planning accommodations and field trips. Please see a board member if you have any suggestions.



Artwork by Georgette Syster

104th CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

by Margaret Buckwalter

(Continued and slightly revised from last month)

The 28 field observers were broken into 14 teams to cover our count circle. The Fye team, consisting of Walter Fye, Shirley Monrean and Evelyn Myers, found the most species, 32. They also found the only Red-shouldered Hawk, and the most Red-winged Blackbirds, 21. The Jerry Stanley/Russ Sates team and the Montgomery team with Ron, Pat Conway, Deb Freed and Ann Hunt were tied for second place with 28 species. The latter team turned up the most Juncos, 144, and the most Tree Sparrows, 46. The Stanley team had the largest number of many species including the most Black-capped Chickadees, Tufted Titmice, White-breasted Nuthatches, American Robins, and Pine Siskins. The Rowe team with Carl, Joan, and Wayne Meier were third in number of species, 27.

Special recognition goes to Greg Cain and Erik Dowlan who spent their whole time on foot in Game Lands #63. Greg found the most Ruffed Grouse, 4, of all the observers and Erik found the most Golden-crowned Kinglets, 12.

Initially we thought the Dark-eyed Junco numbers, 786, were high compared to other counts but on 1/2/99 we saw 2618. Actually, the European Starling, 1517, was our most abundant species. The Junco took second place. American Crow, 728, was in third place. The House Sparrow, 628, took fourth place. Mourning Doves, 604, and American Goldfinches, 560, also made good showings. The total number of birds observed was 7484, about average for our Clarion Count. Total number of species was 51, not counting the Chipping Sparrow found by Ernie Aharrah during Count Week.

The 12 feeder watchers contributed many hours and good solid counts of the commoner species. We are grateful to the following watchers for their contributions to the total count: Bonnie Black, Hendrika Bohlen, Mary Emerick, Harry and Jeanne Hakenson, Edith & Bob Hays, Sally Hockman, Dixie Humphrey, Reba Klingler, Alice McGunigle, Doris Seidle, Lorna & Sherry Vowinckel, and Helen Marie Williams.

(Continued on next page).

Armchair Activist

by Kathy Janik

Both the House of Representatives and the Senate refused the Bush administration's request to use the budget process to allow drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. So for now the millions of birds and other animals that use the refuge are safe from oil drilling intrusions. This result would NOT have happened if thousands of citizens had not taken the time to email, write, or phone their legislators and voiced their opposition to drilling in ANWR. The National Audubon Society heartily thanks those who became involved in this very important environmental issue.

Many thanks to these field observers who dedicated that day to their favorite birding activity: Ernie Aharra, Margaret Buckwalter, Greg Cain, Pat Conway, Erik Dowlan, Deb Freed, Walter Fye, Harvey & Sarah Gano, Janice Horn, Ann Hunt, Flo & Jim McGuire, Ray, McGunigle, Wayne Meier, Shirley Monrean, Ron Montgomery, Evelyn Myers, John & Kathy Pokrifka, Carl and Joan Rowe, Jerry Stanley, Russ States, Gil Twiest, Carole Willenpart, Fran & Jack Williams.

As always, the Count Dinner at the end of the day was fun and exciting. Walter Fye deserves special thanks for his performance as “Master-of-the-Count” and Co-compiler.

The 104th Clarion Count (12/27/03) may be viewed online in the near future at <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc.>; the Region = Pennsylvania, the Count Name = Clarion.



Wildlife Habitat Stewards Sought

Contributed by Janice Horn

The National Wildlife Federation and the Pennsylvania Wildlife Federation are looking for a few dedicated individuals to train as Habitat Steward volunteers. Once trained, these volunteers will be a resource for their communities to assist people who want to create a landscape that is wildlife-friendly and good for the environment. Volunteers will be able to teach people how to get their backyards, schools, work places, or other community sites certified by NWF as official Wildlife Habitat sites.

The training will include guest speakers and topics such as Gardening for Birds, Why Native Plants, Planting for Wildlife, Planting for Reptiles and Amphibians, and other habitat topics. The Habitat Stewards training will take place at the Warwick Hotel, Hummelstown, PA (near Hershey and Harrisburg), on the following dates: April 17 from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM; April 20 from 6 to 9 PM; and April 22 from 6 to 9 PM.

All three sessions should be attended. The Pennsylvania Wildlife Federation will pay the training costs so there is no charge for attendees. Interested participants should contact Cathy Pomanti at (717) 566-6136 or cpomanti@bearingpoint.net for an application form and more detailed information.



Top Five Reasons to get e-Drummer

5. color photos are outstanding
4. print is large and easy to read on-line
3. save a tree
2. save SRAS postage
1. get the Drummer at least a week early

Thank you to those who have chosen e-Drummer!

If you would like to receive e-Drummer, e-mail Deb Freed at dhfreed@csonline.net or sign-up at the April meeting. E-Drummer recipients are notified by e-mail when the newsletter is available on our SRAS web-site, www.senecarocksaudubon.org. Check the web for lots more about our chapter activities and favorite links.





Photo of The Saw-whet by Mike Leahy

Owl Prowl:

One perching, one hooting

by Deb Freed

February 21 proved to be a true winter day with temperatures in the low 30's, brisk winds, snow squalls, and deep snow in the woods. We snowballed into a sizeable group of 19 along the route. Ron's preparation for this field trip kept the large group on schedule and the caravan together.

Right around 3 p.m. the entire group trekked into the woods at Buttermilk Nature Reserve where Kathy Goodblood and Jerry Stanley had reported a Northern Saw-whet Owl. Sure enough, the little guy was perched about twelve feet above the snow in a small Hemlock about a foot from the trunk on an open branch. When asked whether or not the owl would mind the group gathering around the tree, Jerry reported answering, "I don't know. I've never taken this many people out to see the owl". To our delight, the owl remained perched and puffed up, hardly moving.

Earlier in the day, Jerry had observed a catch in its talons. This is one of two Saw-whets that Kathy and Jerry have seen on their

property. Jerry estimates he spent a good 100 hours searching his property for signs of the Saw-whets. This day, Seneca Rocks was the beneficiary of Jerry and Kathy's patient search. Nine of those present listed the Saw-whet as a life bird! From this remarkable start about half of the group continued to the dinner rest while waiting for darkness to fall.

The next leg of the trip involved several stops at the Oil Creek State Park with Park Manager Dan Bickel. Only one stop yielded a distant response, a lone Eastern Screech -owl called once. The evening ended at the park office, where Dan provided hot beverages and Judy Montgomery added some homemade cookies. Dan showed an informative documentary slide show of the park contrasting the valley's oil boom landscape with the recovered natural beauty along the creek.

Attending: Carole and Dick Willenpart, Mike Leahy, Margaret Buckwalter, Hendrika Bohlen, Fran and Jack Williams, Judy and Ron Montgomery, Margo Wimer, Anita Mason, Deb Freed, Gary Edwards, Dan and Caleb Bickel, Kathy Goodblood, Jerry Stanley, Nancy Baker and Tom Prescott.



Did you know?

Researchers at Boston University recently found that some nest parasite birds diverge into different species without being separated by physical barriers. When Indigobirds of Africa parasitize the nests of various finches, the males learn to sing the song of their foster parents, and the females learn to favor males that sing the song of the foster parents. Over time subspecies develop that do not mate with birds that parasitize the nests of other finches.

(Nature, August 21, 2003)



Artwork by Ed Richards

2004 Birdathon May 8th-16th

by Janice Horn

Join the fun, protect birds and count for conservation. SRAS is gearing up for the annual Birdathon -- our chapter's biggest birding and fundraising event. You can select any 24-hour period from May 8th to 16th to have your own marathon to raise money for local and state Audubon programs.

Half the proceeds will support Audubon Pennsylvania, while the rest will be used locally for Audubon Adventures in elementary schools in our chapter area, and other local projects that protect birds, wildlife and their habitats.

Last year we were awarded 1st place in several categories for chapters of our size. Let's work together again this year to achieve the same ranking. You can participate in two ways; by being a "pledge sponsor" and by being a "bird counter".

From kids to seniors, novices to seasoned veterans of the field, all ages and abilities are welcome. Promotional and solicitation materials will be provided, and newcomers will be paired up with experienced birders.

The bird counters should get pledge sponsors. If you are reluctant to ask people you can start easy and seek support from a couple relatives or good friends. Or you can let me put your name on a

list that potential sponsors will select from and sign up for. Experienced Birdathoners can use their lists from previous years and customize them for this year.

Anyone can become a sponsor by pledging an amount for each species observed in the Birdathon -- whether for a Birdathon team or for the chapter as a whole. Also, a flat or fixed pledge amount is an option.

Again this year any sponsor who is not a member can become one for a year with a contribution of \$20 or more. This membership includes the benefits provided by Seneca Rocks Audubon Society and a subscription to AUDUBON Magazine.

Kits will be available at the April meeting for everyone who wants to be a bird observer. Or you can get the kit at any time from Janice Horn, 2004 Birdathon Coordinator (phone: 226-7367 or e-mail: jhhorn162@netscape.net).

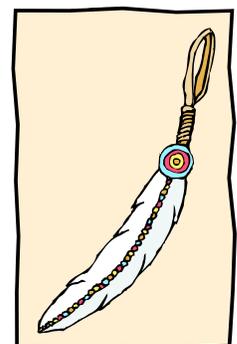
(Please see Birdathon Sponsor Pledge Card on p. 9)

Indian Place Names

(Sunday Morning Muse)

by Ron Montgomery

During our recent hawk-watch field trip, we listened to loons in Quemahoning Lake in Somerset County. This led Deb, always the curious, to wonder about the derivation of that place name and several others of obvious Indian derivation. The following is taken from Indian Villages and Place Names in PA by Donehoo (1927) and The Indian Wars of PA by Sipe (1931). I think the words are primarily of Lenni Lenape (Delaware) origin.



Mahoning derives from Mahoni meaning a lick and "ing" or "ink" meaning at the location. A lick is where "deer, elk and other animals" gathered to satisfy their craving for salt. The prefix que derives

from Cuwei meaning pine tree. So Mahoning creek in Armstrong County means creek with the salt lick. Quemahoning means place of the pine tree lick, perhaps suggesting a salty spring at the base of a pine tree or in a grove of pine trees.

Hanna means river. Heckewelder thought Susquehanna a corruption of Quenischachchekhanne, meaning river with long reach, but there is debate about the meaning. Punxsutawney means town (tawn) of gnats based on ponks meaning gnats or sand flies (or punky flies). While there was probably no town there (because it bordered on being intolerable), early travelers often referred to the terrible infestation of gnats in the area.

Pymatuning derives from pihmtomink which is built from pim-e-u meaning slanted, w'doon meaning mouth and ink or ing meaning place, so Pymatuning is the place where the man with the crooked mouth lives. Heckewelder claimed to have met the man with the deformity referred to. Allegheny is a corruption of Alligewi-hanna or river of the Alligewi. The Alligewi or Talligewi were, according to the Lenni Lenape, an ancient tribe that inhabited the area before they or the Iroquois arrived. The tradition claims that the newcomers migrated from the western part of the continent and took the land from the Talligewi.

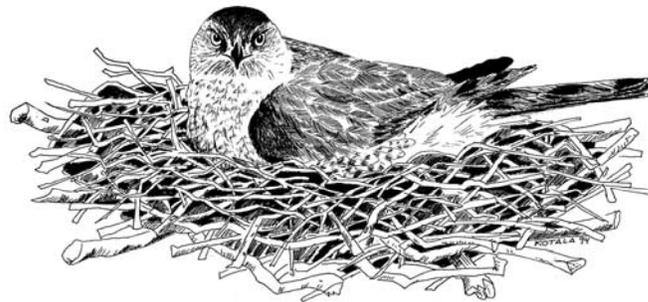


Winter 2004 Bird Seed Sale

by Janice Horn

Thirty-seven people took advantage of this Feb./Mar. bird seed sale that SRAS had in conjunction with the Clarion and Oil City Agways. Slightly over 2 tons of bird food was sold. As of this date I am unable to report the profit because I don't have the bills.

Thank you to all who ordered and to those who helped the day of the pick-up. With the snow on Tues. the 16th the birds have been in a feeding frenzy and they thank you, too.



Artwork by Stan Kotala

Breeding Bird Atlas Project

by Flo McGuire

The Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas Project (BBA) has begun. This is the first year of a five-year effort to determine all the species of birds that breed in the commonwealth. Bob Mulvihill, as project director, has a "Regional Coordinator" in place for each page of the DeLorme Gazetteer.

How it works:

Possible - If you see (or hear) a bird during its "Safe Dates" in proper habitat, it is a "Possible" breeder. As of March 15, this includes Great Horned Owl, Rock Pigeon, Barred Owl, House Sparrow, Common Raven, Downy, Hairy, Pileated and Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Tufted Titmouse, and Northern Cardinal. As of April 1, American Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse, and Carolina Wren will be safe. (The "Safe Dates" are to guard against counting migrating birds as breeders).

Probable - If you see a pair of birds together, witness a territorial dispute, or observe a singing male at the same location on two occasions a week or more apart, within the Safe Dates, it is a "Probable" breeder.

Confirmed - If you see actual proof of breeding, such as a bird carrying nesting material, building a nest (except wrens, who build dummy nests), sitting on eggs, carrying food for young - this will upgrade the species to "Confirmed". It is important to note that a **Confirmation does not need to be within the Safe Dates.**

More detailed information on these codes and the complete list of Safe Dates will be available soon on the PA Breeding Bird Atlas website and also on the Seneca Rocks' website.

Please keep records of your sightings (species, date, location, and activity) and report them to a regional coordinator. Region 43 - Gary Edwards; Region 44 - Mike Leahy (this includes most of Clarion County); Region 45 - Patt Conway (this includes most of Jefferson County); Region 30 - Flo McGuire. If you're not sure of your region, any coordinator can help.

Adopt a Block - We will all find breeding birds in our home block, but the Regional Coordinators need to have their entire region covered. In the first year of the project, we will be concentrating on "Priority Blocks" - i.e., Block 6 of each quad. A block is an approximately square area about

3 1/4 miles on each side. If you like to bird and want to help, please see a Regional Coordinator.

For me, the biggest surprise of the first BBA was the book produced by our volunteer efforts. I had expected a dry, statistical volume, but project director Dan Brauning edited a beautiful, richly illustrated book with an informative article and map for each species found to breed in Pennsylvania.

The BBA is a great excuse to get out in the field, and every breeding bird counts - hope you will join in the fun!



Not a Member? Join Seneca Rocks Audubon Society and enjoy the world of birds, protect wildlife and its habitat, and promote education that fosters appreciation of the natural environment. To join, please contact Membership Chair Sherry Vowinckel at 814-782-3294 or svo@mail.usachoice.net. All meetings are free and open to the public.

Audubon Birdathon! SPONSOR PLEDGE CARD

- I am happy to pledge \$____.____ per species in support of your Birdathon.
- I prefer to pledge the enclosed gift of \$____.____ (Please make checks payable to "SRAS").
- My employer matches gifts; Matching Gift form Enclosed.

Sponsors who give \$20 or above will be offered a one-year Complimentary Audubon membership, including a Subscription to the award-winning AUDUBON magazine.

Donations are tax-deductible.

NAME OF BIRDER OR TEAM YOU ARE SPONSORING: _____

The birder/team you are sponsoring will contact you to collect the money pledged.

SPONSOR INFORMATION:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Email _____



Every dollar you give will support Audubon's mission to protect birds, wildlife and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the Earth's biological diversity.

Seneca Rocks 20 Year Anniversary Celebration May 10, 2004 Timberwolf Lodge
Reservations due May 1

Dinner at 6 p.m. Stuffed Chicken Breast or Stuffed Pork Chop
 Includes: Potato, Vegetable, Salad, Roll, Pie, Punch & Coffee

Cost: \$10 per person 13 and older; \$5 per child 6 to 12; no charge 5 and under

_____ Chicken @ \$10 Sub total \$ _____

_____ Chicken @ \$5 Sub total \$ _____

_____ Pork @ \$10 Sub total \$ _____

_____ Pork @ \$5 Sub total \$ _____

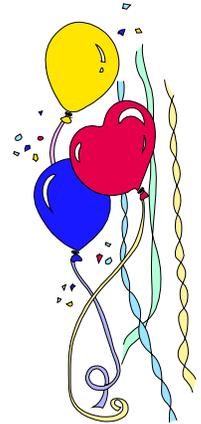
Make check payable to Seneca Rocks Audubon for \$ _____

_____ Name

_____ Phone

Send to: Deb Freed, 208 Briar Hill Drive, Clarion, PA 16214

Before May 1



Seneca Rocks Audubon Society
c/o Sherry Vowinckel, Membership Chair
59 Maple Drive
Shippenville, PA 16254