



# THE DRUMMER

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



September/October 2013

Volume 30, No. 1

## PA Breeding Bird Atlas Presentation

Dan Brauning

*September 11 Program*

Dan Brauning will summarize highlights from the recently-published *Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania*, of which he, Andy Wilson and Bob Mulvihill were editors. This presentation will address significant changes observed from the first Pennsylvania breeding bird atlas, including species gained and lost, other notable changes in distribution, and the conservation value of this work. He will also describe and provide examples of Pennsylvania's innovative point count survey to obtain population density for over half of the species. This will include a discussion of how Bird Atlas projects compliment the annual Breeding Bird Survey for population monitoring, and some analytical methods employed to obtain these results. This is a richly illustrated presentation with many maps and bird photos.

Dan Brauning works with a strong team of biologists to plan and implement conservation of Pennsylvania's birds and mammals. Joining the Pennsylvania Game Commission as Ornithologist in 1990, he now juggles the issues of bird and mammal research and management as the Chief of the Wildlife Diversity Program. Dan assists with a number of state and regional projects, including Project Director of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas Project (2004-2009), and Co-Editor (with Dr. Andy Wilson and Robert Mulvihill) of the resulting book, the *Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in*

*Pennsylvania* (2012). Other highlights include the conservation of the Piney Tract – now SGL 330. Prior to coming to the Game Commission, Dan served as Project Coordinator of the first Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas Project. He completed that effort as editor of the book, the *Atlas of the Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania* (1992). In 2000 he co-authored, with Gerald McWilliams, *The Birds of Pennsylvania*.

We are eagerly looking forward to welcoming Dan and learning more about "The Atlas". He will have copies of the *Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania* for sale - this volume is must for your own library or makes a lovely gift.

## Hawk Identification

Mike Leahy

*October 9 Program*

Our own Mike Leahy will present October's program and help us learn more about identifying raptors. A long-time member of Seneca Rocks, Mike has led our group to the Allegheny Front and other Hawk Watches many times.

He will present a power point from the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA - [www.hmana.org](http://www.hmana.org)). He will cover the four main groups of raptors - accipiters, buteos, falcons, and eagles. Mike will also have several

Our programs are held at the Clarion Free Library. Come early to socialize - program begins at 6:30 pm.

hand-outs that members can take home to aid in their raptor identification.

Be sure to join us and be prepared for that next trip to the Allegheny Front - or the next raptor that soars over your back yard.

### **Don't Put Away Your Hummingbird Feeder!**

Last fall birders in Pennsylvania documented 94 western hummingbirds of four species. This is the time to start watching your feeder carefully for a western bird.

Look for chestnut color on the rump or tail. Many ruby-throats have peachy sides and flanks, but a rufous or Allen's Hummingbird will have bright rust.

If you have a hummingbird that looks different, contact someone on our Leadership Team - we will be glad to check it out.

*From Treasurer Janice Horn:*

*SRAS sends a huge thank you to the Garden Club of Clarion County for their generous donation which will enable us to provide birding and nature books to elementary schools in four counties. Their contributions help the libraries which in many cases have very small budgets. Thank you for interest in reaching out to children.*

*Thank you to everyone who participated in the Birdathon this year. Contributions totaled \$550.00 and will be used for our educational programs.*

The *Drummer* is the 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 4 times per year— September, November, February, and April.

The *Drummer* is available on our website 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).



*An American Redstart was one of the many birds in Fran & Jack's yard*

## **An Early August Mixed Species Feeding Frenzy**

~ Fran & Jack Williams

On August 9, around 4:30 pm, the sun appeared after two or more days of cool, gloomy, rainy weather.

Around 4:45 pm we noticed a great deal of bird activity in Mock Orange, Lilac and Forsythia shrubs and adjacent woodland trees outside our kitchen windows.

The activity included a family of Titmice bathing in our deck birdbath with a few other species trying to sneak in.

Soon it became evident that there were a lot of birds and many more species feeding in the shrubs, trees and on the ground.

Many of the birds had caterpillars in their beaks. Most were singles but some appeared to be mated pairs.

Most interesting in this regard were the presence of two and possibly three pairs of Indigo Buntings.

In several instances the males were seen to deliver caterpillars to what appeared to be females.

There were so many birds involved that we could not get an accurate count of individuals so we simply recorded the observed species.

### **THE SPECIES LIST: (15 in all)**

Ruby throated Hummingbird  
Hooded Warbler  
Eastern Phoebe  
American Redstart  
Black-capped Chickadee  
Northern Cardinal  
Tufted Titmouse  
Indigo Bunting  
White-breasted Nuthatch  
Eastern Towhee  
Cedar Waxwing  
Chipping Sparrow  
Blue-headed Vireo  
Field Sparrow  
Chestnut-sided Warbler



*The Northern Mockingbird is the state bird of Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Texas*

## The Name Game

~ Gary Edwards

In 1927, Alabama, Florida, Maine, Missouri, Oregon, Texas, and Wyoming began the trend of designating an official state bird. Arizona completed the process in 1973 by conferring that title on the Cactus Wren. So all states have an official bird but some species have been selected by multiple states.

There are 28 species represented, 29 if you count D.C.'s Wood Thrush. The Northern Cardinal is the most popular species, chosen by seven states, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia. Second most popular is the Western Meadowlark, the favorite in six states, Kansas, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota Oregon, and Wyoming. The Northern Mockingbird places third, being honored in Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Texas. Other multiple winners are the American Robin (Connecticut, Michigan, Wisconsin); American Goldfinch (Iowa, New Jersey, Washington); Eastern Bluebird (Missouri, New York); Mountain Bluebird (Idaho, Nevada); Black-capped Chickadee (Maine, Massachusetts). The remaining 20 states have unique species.

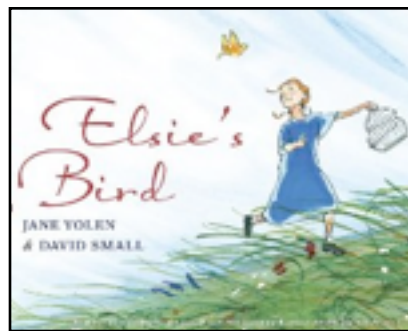
It's interesting that Delaware selected the Blue Hen Chicken as its representative and Rhode Island, not to be outdone, named the Rhode Island Red. Hunting of the state bird is allowed in Alaska (Willow Ptarmigan), California (California Quail), South Dakota (Ring-necked Pheasant), and Pennsylvania (Ruffed Grouse, chosen in 1931).

Here are the rest. Alabama (Northern Flicker), Arizona (Cactus Wren), Colorado (Lark Bunting), Georgia (Brown Thrasher), Hawaii (Hawaiian Goose), Louisiana (Brown Pelican), Maryland (Baltimore Oriole), Minnesota (Common Loon), New Hampshire (Purple Finch), New Mexico (Greater Roadrunner), Oklahoma (Scissor-tailed Flycatcher), South Carolina (Carolina Wren), Utah (California Gull), and Vermont (Hermit Thrush).

Not content with only a state bird, five states have named an official state game bird: Alabama, Massachusetts, and South Carolina selected the Wild Turkey while Georgia and Tennessee named the Northern Bobwhite. Mississippi also has selected the Wood Duck as its state waterfowl.

## Books Given to Local Schools

~ Paulette Colantonio



Seneca Rocks has again purchased books for local elementary school libraries using funds donated by the Clarion County Garden Club and our own organization. This year, nine titles were offered, covering

three genres for collection development.

The four nonfiction titles included *A Place for Birds* by Melissa Stewart, *About Birds: A Guide for Children* by Cathryn Sill, *Brilliant Birds* by Isabel Thomas, and *Puffling Patrol* by Ted and Betsy Lewin.

Twelve species of winged creatures are examined in *A Place for Birds*. Each bird is depicted in its natural habitat in a vivid double-spread acrylic painting. Factual sidebars accompany a short narrative about a particular population, relating how humans have harmed the bird and its habitat and ways people are now trying to help the species. This book is a harmonious blending of ornithology and ecology for intermediate readers.

*About Birds: A Guide for Children* is a first glimpse into the variety of birds for primary naturalists. Simple sentences and phrases are supported by stunning watercolors painted by the author's husband. The back of the book contains an afterward, giving more information on each species, a glossary, and a list of websites.

*Brilliant Birds* is a part of Raintree Publishing's "Extreme Animals: Read Me" series. This selection accentuates some of the more unusual birds and unusual avian behaviors. Weaver birds, bowerbirds, kakapos, and bee hummingbirds are some of the stars featured. An amazing or astonishing photograph accompanies large print text about a species always introduced with bold adjectives. *Brilliant Birds* is an enticement for young readers to explore more sources about bird diversity. The back of the book contains a glossary, websites, and a list of more books to read.

The predominately black, white, and gray cover of *Puffling Patrol* is initially a puzzlement. The cover art is quickly forgotten after the book is opened, adorned with pen and ink and watercolor field sketches and full-spread watercolor illustrations. Heimaey, an island off the coast of Iceland, is the setting for this wonderful story. Ted and Betsy Lewin, the authors-illustrators, actually visited the island of 4,300 people. They chronicle the annual rescue of juvenile puffins, here called pufflings, following two young eight-year-old twins, Erna and Dani, members of the children's group called The Puffling Patrol. The exciting story also contains scientific elements as researchers brave the rough ocean to explore puffin burrows and gather data to assist the island's declining puffin chick population. (In 2007, approximately 1,600 pufflings were rescued from the town's lights and returned to the sea. In 2010, only 10 pufflings were found). Puffling Patrol is a great catalyst for discussions about conservation, stewardship, science, social studies, and the intricate balance of life on Earth. And yes, just what is captured in the front cover artwork?

*Birds of a Feather* by Jane Yolen and *Today at the Blue-Bird Café: A Branchful of Birds* by Deborah Ruddell are examples of poetry about birds. Stunning photography and creative poems in varied forms are employed to examine 14 species of avian friends in the Yolen selection suitable for children or adults. The author teams up with her son, photographer Jason Stemple, to offer a fresh angle for studying birds. Donald Kroodsma, a noted ornithologist and reviewer of the book writes, "remind(ing) us that birds are far more than an accumulation of facts." Choosing a favorite poem is difficult, but I offer, "Terns Galore," a clever scherzo.

At the seaside, terns galore,  
One tern, one tern, one tern more.  
I tern, You tern.  
Overhead and high, tern.  
Underneath and 'bye tern.  
Why, tern, why turn?  
Turning terns are all returning,  
There upon the shore.

Deborah Ruddell's book unfolds offering 22 delightful poems reflecting bird personalities rather than scientific

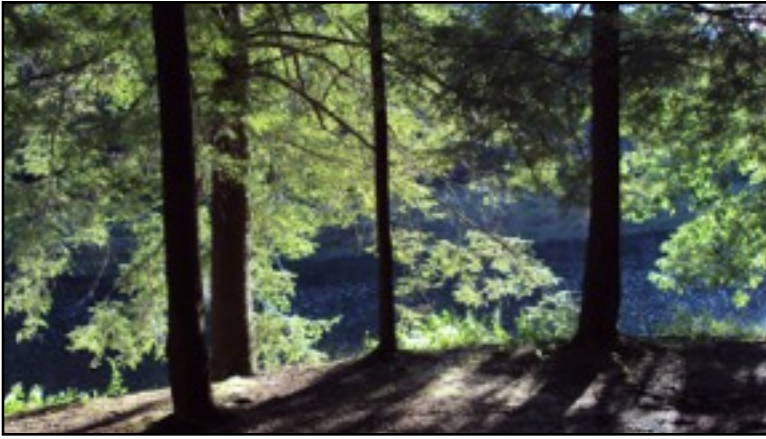
information. The poems are silly, thoughtful, and child-like. They beg to be read aloud. The whimsical watercolor illustrations support the words and stand on their own merit.

The last three books are fictional stories; *Little Owl's Night* by Divya Srinivasan, *Elsie's Bird* by Jane Yolen and *The Longest Night* by Marion Dane Bauer. *Little Owl's Night* is a gentle telling about the beauty of the night and the creatures thereof. "Little Owl sat on his branch. How he loved the night forest." Owl and his friends enjoy the nocturnal wood, a comforting thought for younger children who wonder about the darkness. The author/illustrator, Divya Srinivasan uses graphic elements on black backgrounds to support the poetic prose. Owl's extremely large green eyes on his little body help the reader peer into the night only to be lulled to sleep.

*Elsie's Bird* is a narrative about a little girl living with her parents in Boston. She loves the cobbled streets of the busy city and its familiar birds; cardinals, chickadees, wrens, and robins. After her mother's death, Elsie and her father move to the prairie of Nebraska. Elsie is afraid to leave the sod house. Her only comfort is her pet canary, Timmy Tune. "She sang back and forth with him, hymns and jump-rope tunes and old catches and sailor songs." On the day her father travels 10 miles into town, Timmy flies out an open window into the ocean of grass. Without thinking, Elsie follows. Soon she is lost, but with Timmy's help she discovers the birds of the prairie and her way back home. This is a wonderful historical introduction to the prairie for young listeners and intermediate readers.

*The Longest Night* casts a spell on the reader as the creatures of the forest, suffering through the long winter equinox, try to cajole the sun into returning "The snow lies deep. The night is long and long. The stars are ice, the moon is frost, and all the world is still." Moose, crow, and fox converse with the wind, boasting how they can make the sun return. Wind sighs and reports they cannot bring the sun. When a small chickadee asks, "Who can bring back the Sun?" the wind answers, "You... only you." Ted Lewin only uses three dark colors for most of the paintings; Van Dyke Brown, ultramarine blue, and the green shade of Winsor blue, creating ethereal pictures that somehow glow with moonlight. When Chickadee begins to sing, "Slowly, slowly, the sun opens his eyes. He stretches. He tilts his head listening... and the sun smiles." The last pages are streaked with the colors of dawn as the world begins its journey toward spring. This book is so alive with figurative language, it needs to be read aloud to be fully appreciated.

Librarians' choices and numbers are currently being tabulated. A report on the actual results is forthcoming.



*Hemlocks at Cook Forest, River Drive, photo by Pat Conway*

## Programs at Cook Forest State Park

~Dale Luthringer

### Saturday, August 31 at 2:00 pm - **'Save Our Hemlocks!'**

The hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) has finally made it to Cook Forest. HWA has totally decimated the Smoky Mountains & Blue Ridge, and has been working its way into Western Pennsylvania for the last several years. Please meet at the Park Office for a challenging interpretive walk along the Seneca Trail to learn how we are trying combat this beast in the finest and most significant hemlock stand remaining in the entire Eastern U.S. (2 hrs)

### Saturday, August 31 at 8:00 pm - **'A Virtual Tour of Cook Forest'**

There are many things to see and do during your stay at Cook Forest, from walking amongst magnificent tall and ancient old growth forests to taking a scenic float down the National Wild & Scenic Clarion River. Do you like to investigate wildlife, take a hike on a trail, or are you just trying to find a short break from the rigors of life? There's just so much to do in such a short amount of time that it's just impossible to pack it all into one trip. We challenge you to leave your electronic gadgets at home and start a family tradition that will last generations... many of your fellow campers already have. Bring your chairs and blankets to the Ridge Camp park amphitheater for an evening virtual tour that will bring back many memories and help you to make new ones.

Sunday, September, 1 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 230pm. (3 hrs)

Saturday, September 7 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.

Scouts and other civic organizations, this is a great time to have fun AND get your volunteer hours in at the same time. (6hrs)

Friday, September 13 at 7:30 pm - **'Night Fishin' on the Clarion'** Did you know that fishing at night is often THE best time to fish? The National Wild & Scenic Clarion River contains many different kinds of fish and wildlife that are very active at night. Fish that are often wary during the day come out of their hiding spots at night to feed. Smallmouth bass and brook trout can be readily caught during daylight, but big brownies, catfish, and walleye are often on the prowl at night. Please bring your fishing poles, lanterns, and bait to the Park Office where we'll car-pool to fishing hotspots along the river. Don't forget your chicken livers! (3 hrs)

Saturday, September 14 at 10:00 am - **'A Walk Through the Forest Cathedral'** Please meet at the Log Cabin Inn Environmental Learning Classroom for an interpretive hike into the finest stand of old growth E. white pine in the entire Northeastern U.S. Don't miss this unique opportunity to observe the Longfellow Pine, tallest known tree in the entire Northeastern U.S! Learn how to identify old growth forest characteristics, and observe different types of environmental disturbance that are an integral part of old growth forest ecosystems. (2 hrs)

Sunday, September 15 at 1:00 pm - **'Fire Tower Historical Tour'** Please bring your binoculars to the Fire Tower for an historical tour of Fire Tower #9 conducted by park volunteers, Kelley & Al Bilotto. Take a breathtaking view from the box at the very top of the Fire Tower and learn how it operated. The tower will be open from 1:00-3:00pm. (2 hrs)

Tuesday, September 17 at 7:30 pm - **'Spotting Pennsylvania's Elusive White-tail Deer'** Please bring your spotlights and meet at the Log Cabin Inn Environmental Learning Classroom for an evening driving tour as we car-pool to Cook Forest's white-tail

hotspots. Come learn about the natural history of our Commonwealth's state mammal, as we cruise the park searching for this elusive animal. (3 hrs)

Sunday, September 29 at 1:00 pm - **'Fire Tower Historical Tour'** Please bring your binoculars to the Fire Tower for an historical tour of Fire Tower #9 conducted by park volunteers, Kelley & Al Bilotto. Take a breathtaking view from the box at the very top of the Fire Tower and learn how it operated. The tower will be open from 1:00-3:00pm. (2 hrs)

Friday, October 4 at 7:00 pm - **'Owl Prowl'** Please bring your flashlights and meet at the Log Cabin Inn Environmental Learning Classroom for an evening owl prowling. Explore Cook Forest at night for Pennsylvania's owls as we car-pool to owl hotspots in the park. Barred, great horned, screech and saw-whet owls have been known to make an appearance. (3 hrs)

Sunday, October 13 at 1:00 pm - **'Fire Tower Historical Tour'** Please bring your binoculars to the Fire Tower for an historical tour of Fire Tower #9 conducted by park volunteers, Kelley & Al Bilotto. Take a breathtaking view from the box at the very top of the Fire Tower and learn how it operated. The tower will be open from 1:00-3:00pm. (2 hrs)

Saturday, October 19 at 8:00 am - **'Woody Owl Workday'** Have you been looking for a way to get involved with Cook Forest State Park? Please consider joining us for the day to help maintain the park through various work projects. Woody Owl and Smokey Bear will be here to help also. Work projects may include invasive species removal, trail maintenance, litter pickup, painting, wood stacking, etc. Free camping Friday and/or Saturday nights will be available for volunteers, with prior notice received by Friday, October 5. If you are planning to join us for the day, please contact the Park Office (814)744-8407 at least two weeks in advance so that we can have a volunteer project lined up for you. Lunch will be provided. (5.5hrs)

### Purple Martin Gourds for Sale

Mrs. Rex, who lives on Rt. 322 near Kossuth, would like to sell 20 used SuperGourds. These are well-made, one-piece plastic gourds, purchased from the Purple Martin Conservation Association, [www.purplemartin.org](http://www.purplemartin.org). She also has 2 large wooden houses and is willing to give the poles to anyone who is interested in the gourds. You may call her at 797-1440.

## Clarion County Spring 2013 Report

~ Carole Winslow

**Locations:** Cherry Run/Rimersburg (CR), Curllsville strips (CV), Foxburg Islands (FB), Madison Shop Rd (MS), Mount Airy (MA), Mount Zion (Piney Tract IBA/SGL 330)(MZ), Sarah Furnace (SF).

A nice selection of waterfowl starts out this seasonal report, most from CR, a recently discovered area that appears to draw in a nice variety of birds during migration. A collection of small to medium sized ponds on reclaimed strip mine fields outside of Rimersburg, the water here is apparently of good enough quality to provide some respectable habitat for these birds. The

selection includes up to 2 **Gadwall** until 3/26, up to 12 **American Wigeon** also through 3/26, and up to 10 **Northern Pintail** through the same date (MM). The pintails particularly are an excellent number for the county. In later migration, **Blue-winged Teal** were first seen here 4/1 with 6 birds present, and then continuing in smaller numbers through 4/26 (MM). During this period **Green-winged Teal** were also seen starting with one bird on 3/20 and continuing through 4/26, with the maximum count of 11 birds 4/9

(MM). Another pond on reclaimed strip mine property at CV hosted 7 **Greater Scaup** 3/12, a decent number for this small body of water (MM). Two **Long-tailed Ducks** provided an excellent record for the county 3/17, present on a medium size privately owned pond outside of Rimersburg for just a day (MM). Last for waterfowl reports, a single **Ruddy Duck** was present late into the migration season, seen at MA on a farm pond 5/19 (CW).

**Wild Turkey** are a common sight in the county, but it was very unusual to find a hen on a nest site in scrub and brush not even 10 feet off a rural dirt road near CV 5/11(MM,CW). The nest had 16 eggs in it, and was located under some wild honeysuckle bushes. On the following day all but one egg remained but the bird was not seen again and subsequent checks showed the nest site to be unsuccessful, likely due to high disturbance probable at this location. **Common Loon** is a species not uncommon to the county in migration, however this year 4 birds were found on the Clarion River outside of Clarion 4/17 (PM). This river is smaller and has poorer quality than the Allegheny and Kahle Lake where they are normally found. The last bird noted for the season was seen at Sarah Furnace 5/11 on the Allegheny River (CW). For raptor sightings, the best of the season was seen at CR



*American Tree Sparrows lingered till mid-April*

4/7, a single **Golden Eagle** seen hunting over reclaimed strip mine fields (MM,ST). This was a first year bird and is an excellent record for the county, with no previous reports in the past 10 years. Of note because of their declining status, **Northern Harriers** were reported in numbers no more than 2 birds for five sites in the county, all reclaimed strip mine fields or in proximity to them. These sites were CV, CR, MA, MZ and also one property not far from CV. Reports began 3/10 at CV and continued through the end of the spring season (FB, SG, MM, CW). **Bald Eagle** nesting remains successful along the rivers in the county, with at least one fledged young seen in the nest along the Clarion River 5/10 in the central part of the county (CW). South of Parker on the Allegheny River, 3 young birds were photographed in a nest there with the first bird reportedly hatched on 3/18 (MM). County boundaries do need clarified for this particular nest site, however. Two adult birds were also seen at Kahle Lake 4/7 (MM,ST).

A scattered number of shorebird reports were received for spring, always worth reporting in *Clarion* with limited and very scattered habitat for these species. At SF on the Allegheny River, 4 **Spotted Sandpipers** were seen during the PAMC 5/11 (CW). At MS, areas of flooded fields/marsh at the edge of a recently reclaimed strip mine outside of Rimersburg, four species of shorebirds were reported this season. Two **Least Sandpiper** were seen 4/25, and then a single bird 5/16 (MM). Two **Lesser Yellowlegs** were present 5/6, and **Solitary Sandpiper** were found 4/25 with 2 individuals and then 3 seen 5/9 (MM). **Wilson's Snipe** were also present at MS, first seen 3/26 with three individuals, almost a month later than their early arrival last year (MM). A single bird was seen again here 4/6 (CW). A single **Wilson's Snipe** was also seen in a flooded farm field in Limestone 4/6 and again 4/8 (F&JW). **Greater Yellowlegs** were reported starting with a single bird seen on the Allegheny River at FB 4/7 (MM,ST) and then 3 birds at a farm pond on MA 4/14 (CW). A single bird was seen calling in a flyover sighting near CV 5/11 (CW). **Upland Sandpipers** were not reported back for the season until a bird heard calling at MA 5/6 (DE,SS), and then a single bird was also seen there 5/19 (CW). Two birds were noted at the bowl area at MZ 5/20, an area where they have not previously been reported (CK,JR). **American Woodcock** were first heard calling and performing display flights 3/11 near CV, a little more than a week later than their first date last year (CW).

The only significant gull report is for 29 **Bonaparte's Gulls** seen in migration along the Allegheny River at FB 4/7 (MM,ST). **Barred Owls** are not as commonly reported in *Clarion* as other species, so a report of a bird calling from 5/20 through 5/29 in a wooded area at the edge of Rimersburg is worth noting (MM). **Short-eared Owls** were noted for the season only at MA, with a single bird seen 3/5 and 3/15, then two birds together 4/6 (CW). No

reports were received for this species after this date, leaving breeding once again unlikely for them this year. A single report of **Merlin** was received for the season, a bird not frequently reported. It was seen at the Clarion University campus 4/23 (JK), and while details were not available it's suspected it was possibly utilizing the scattered stands of spruce and pines on the grounds of the campus during migration.

Most flycatcher species were noted arriving approximately a week later than normal dates this year. **Acadian Flycatchers** were not seen back until 5/19 at SF (SC), **Willow Flycatchers** were first reported back that date also near CV (CW), and **Alder Flycatchers** were first noted with 2 birds heard singing at an area near Frogtown 5/25 (CW). **Eastern Phoebe** was conspicuously late with an arrival date of 4/5 near CV (CW), close to a month later than it's previous early date, and approximately 3 weeks later than its more typical arrival period. A wren sighting of note this year is an usual report of a **Marsh Wren** at MS 5/16 (MM). Only two other sightings are known of this species in the county, both during migration. On 4/1, another species not always reported was noted at CR with 25 **American Pipits** seen in reclaimed strip mine fields at the site (MM).

**Worm-eating Warblers** continue to be regular at their breeding site in SF, first seen back 5/2 and then reported through the end of the season (SC,MM,CW). **Louisiana Watherthrush** also continue to utilize this site despite the questionable water quality of the streams here due to acid mine drainage. They were first heard singing 4/18, somewhat later than their usual arrival, and then a pair found together 5/2 at another site along the Armstrong Trail along the Allegheny River here (CW). A single **Golden-winged Warbler** was seen 5/19 near CV (SC), a species with very few reports for the county in recent years. **Tennessee Warblers** made a very early return, or at least for a single individual, seen 5/2 near CV feeding on a flowering quince and fighting for position with a Baltimore oriole. A **Yellow-throated Warbler** was found singing along Phillipston Rd near East Brady 4/21 (CW), another uncommon species for the county, although likely undetected in some areas as there is habitat available. The only other warbler report of note is that of **Wilson's Warbler**, with one bird seen near CV 5/10 and then also 5/18 (CW), as these birds are not always reported in migration, especially in spring.

**American Tree Sparrows** were late leaving this season, as other birds were late in arriving. Numbers up to 16 were still present at feeders near CV 4/4, then gradually decreasing through the next week to 2 birds last seen 4/15 (CW). **Clay-colored sparrows** returned to their regular breeding site at CV, but were not reported this year until 5/9, a week later than last year (DH). **Vesper Sparrows** are always the least reported grassland sparrow in the county,

and this year were not noted until a singing male was seen 5/19 at CV (MM). Both **Grasshopper Sparrows** and **Henslow's Sparrows** were also about a week later than their previous early dates, with grasshopper sparrows at CV 4/26 (MM), and Henslow's back at Rankin Rd near CV 4/21 (CW). Henslow's sparrows in particular continued with regular reports in their usual locations through the season and numbers appeared to be excellent for the year with high counts of at least 18 birds 4/30 at MA, increased numbers at CV with habitat changes, and continuing numbers of easily 20+ at MZ (CW).

**Scarlet Tanager** numbers were noted to be high this year during PAMC 5/11, with birds singing from every size of woodlot and a very conservative count of 33 for the small amount of the county surveyed (CW, RS). **Purple Finches** are regularly present in appropriate habitat in the county, but this year were observed in nest building 5/10 in a yard with blue spruce and Norway spruce near CV (CW). The birds were building in the top of a blue spruce and 4 birds were noted on that day. The last of the crossbill invasion came with a sighting of a single female **Red Crossbill** at MZ 5/14 (MM). **Common Redpolls** remained numerous through March at feeders in Strattanville, Limestone, Clarion, Rimersburg and CV (JH, RM, MM, CW, F&JW). Numbers reached as high as approximately 60 birds in Limestone and continued there through 3/30, while the last birds were reported from Strattanville and Rimersburg both 4/3. **Pine Siskins** were also seen in small numbers at feeders, with up to 3 birds at Rimersburg through 5/16 (MM), and last seen with 12 birds at CV feeders 5/18 (CW). To round out the winter finch invasion report, a single sighting of **Evening Grosbeaks** was reported from a feeder in Limestone 3/25, with one male and 2 females present (F&JW).

Observers: **Carole Winslow, 159 Moggey Rd, Sligo, PA 16255, 814-745-3818, [cjnal@windstream.net](mailto:cjnal@windstream.net)**, Fern Bauman, Shawn Collins, Dan Efroymson, Steve Gosser, Daniel Hinnebusch, Janice Horn, Murray Jukes, Chad Kauffman, Jon Kauffman, Ron Montgomery, Mark Moore, Phyllis Morrow, Joan Renninger, Steve Sanford, Ruth Schurr, Shannon Thompson, Fran and Jack Williams, Brian Young.



## Common Nighthawk Migration Count

~Gary Edwards

Our annual nighthawk count is off to a somewhat slow start with 262 birds counted in the first 11 evenings. Considering that the Duluth, MN hawk watch counted over 5300 nighthawks in one day, we probably won't set any records—but we have a good time. Thus far Nick & Meg Kolodick, Jim Wilson, Jim & Flo McGuire, Carl & Joan Rowe, and Russ States have joined the fun. We can always use more eyes, so if you're looking for something to do some evening, bring your binocs, a folding chair, and your good humor and join us at the Oil City Marina at the foot of Wyllis Street. If coming from the Cranberry Mall, proceed down Seneca Hill to the 2<sup>nd</sup> traffic light in Oil City (Petroleum St.), turn left one block to West 1<sup>st</sup> St. Turn right on West 1<sup>st</sup> St., continue around the first bend to the left, the streets approaching Wyllis are Orange, Innis, and Moran. Turn right on Wyllis to the marina parking lot. Hope you can make it.

## A SWIFT NIGHT OUT!

~Gary Edwards

As summer draws to a close and the swifts have finished raising their young, these fascinating aerial acrobats begin to congregate in communal roosts prior to their fall migration. Some roosts may consist of an extended family group of a half a dozen birds or so, but the larger sites can host hundreds or even thousands of swifts! Here is how it works: Keep your eyes to the skies at dusk and watch for areas where swifts are feeding. Look for a tall shaft, chimney or similar structure to locate where Chimney Swifts go to roost in your area. On one night over the weekend of September 6th, 7th and 8th observe the roost starting about 30 minutes before sunset and estimate the number of swifts that enter. When you have your number, please fill out the online form at:

<http://www.chimneyswifts.org/page234.html>

That's all there is to it! One local building where the swifts put on a spectacular display is in Emlenton at the Crawford Center, a former schoolhouse that now houses the Borough offices, but there have to be others. There's a nice parking lot to watch from.



## Upcoming Dates & Events

September 11 Program - PA Breeding Bird Atlas

October 9 Program - Hawk Identification

November 13 Program - TBA

December 11 Program - TBA

Christmas Bird Count - December 28



*A Colorful Fall Day at the Allegheny Front*

*There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,  
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,  
There is society, where none intrudes,  
By the deep sea, and music in its roar:  
I love not man the less, but Nature more.*

*~George Gordon, Lord Byron, Childe  
Harold's Pilgrimage*

### SRAS Leadership Team

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