



THE DRUMMER



www.senecarocksaudubon.org

February, 2008

Volume 24, No. 5

**Next Meeting – February 11
Room 150, Becker Hall
Social – 6:30 p.m. Program – 7:00 p.m.**

Christmas Bird Count, December 15, 2007

by Fran Williams

Jim Holden Presents Rails to Trails

Jim Holden, President of the Allegheny Valley Trails Association (AVTA), will present this program. He and David Howes founded AVTA in 1990 to convert 35 miles of donated abandoned railroad property into a multipurpose recreational trail. In the 18 years of its existence, the all-volunteer non-profit AVTA has developed, and now maintains 40 miles of paved trail in Venango and Clarion counties. Funding sources have included federal, state and local grants and donations totaling over \$7 million.

A Trail Utilization Study done in 2006 counted 160,000 trail users and a \$4 Million economic impact in Venango County.

Jim Holden retired from the Computer and Information Science Department of Clarion University in 2001 and is presently the owner/operator of an organic beef, pork and garden vegetable farm near Franklin.

We are fortunate to live near such a beautiful system of trails – join us on February 11 to meet Jim Holden, learn more about the trails, and to appreciate what can be accomplished by dedicated volunteers. 🐾🐾

What a day! Sunny, crisp and cold. We started the day at 24F and it didn't change much for the 6 hours that we were out. The lowest and highest recorded temperatures of the day, for the chapter, were 22 and 30 respectively. But we had a lot of sun, so spirits were high and we were glad to be out. I heard that some of us got caught in a blizzard by the end of the day, but more about that later.

Well, we had a splendid turnout of people that Saturday. Twenty-eight participants in 12 teams went out into the field:

Carl & Joan Rowe, with Wayne & John Meier
Walt Fye, with Shirley Monrean & Evelyn Myers
Gary Edwards & Jim Wilson
Ron Montgomery, with Carole Willenpart &
Alan Winslow
Jack & Fran Williams, with Ruth Schurr
Peter Dalby & Ernie Aharrah

See our Spring Bird Seed Sale form on
page 7.

Order by February 13;
Pick up March 10 through 15.

Deb Freed, with Pat Conway & Ann Hunt
Erik Dowlan
Ted Buckwalter
Flo & Jim McGuire
Pokey & Kathy Pokrifka
Janice Horn & Anita Mason



We also had 17 Feeder Watchers:

Ron & Bonnie Black
Margaret Buckwalter
Hendrika Bolen
Mary Emerick
Harry & Jeanne Hakanson
Sally Hockman
Bob Hays
Bill & Henrietta Kodrich
Jerry McCall
Reba Klinger
Alice Thurau & Keith Hileman
Gil Twiest
Lorna Vowinkle
Margo Wimer
Dixie Humphrey

The total count of birds for the day was 9797 individuals. I realize that's sort of a silly number since so much of the counting of large flocks involves guesstimations, but that's okay. It is what it is. The other exciting number is 56! That's how many species we tallied. I've been told this is pretty good, considering how cold it was.

I'd like to thank Ruth Schurr for her considerable work in tallying and reporting our chapter's data to National Audubon. It was fun having Ruth join Jack and me in the field and it was fun working with her on the data. Thanks, Ruth.

I'd also like to thank the hearty souls who made it to BJ's that evening. We were a small crowd, but everyone was as enthusiastic as ever, and everyone's participation in the tallying was a big help for Ruth and me. Thanks. The "bird" dinner was sooo good after being out all day, but getting there and back home was a bit "interesting". I'd call the evening weather – a baby blizzard!

Here are some of the highlights of the day:

The rarest birds (4 or less individuals):

- 1 Bald Eagle (Team Janice)
- 1 Gray Catbird (Team Pete)
- 1 Hooded Merganser (Team Deb)
- 1 Northern Shrike (Team Jack)
- 1 Northern Harrier (Team Walt)
- 1 Common Raven (Team Ron)
- 1 Hermit Thrush (Team Ron)
- 1 Great Horned Owl (Team Ron)
- 1 Brown-headed Cowbird (Team Flo)
- 2 Great Blue Heron (Team Walt & Feeder

Watch)

- 2 Black Duck (Team Walt)
- 3 Brown Creeper (Team Gary, Erik, Feeder

Watch)

- 3 Northern Mockingbird (Teams Gary & Ron)
- 3 Short-eared Owl (Shirley)
- 4 Carolina Wren (Team Ron & Feeder Watch)
- 4 Northern Pintail (Teams Walt & Gary)

Big numbers:

Carl's team saw 524 Canada Geese, 34 Northern Cardinals, and 90 Rock Doves. Walt's team had 148 Blue Jays. Ron's team had 128 Black-capped Chickadees and 173 Dark-eyed Juncoes. Williams' team had 1213 European Starlings, 145 Cedar Waxwings and 72 American Robins. Deb's team had 360 American Crows. Gary & Jim saw 93 Mourning Doves.

Large Single sightings: Flo's team- 32 Common Redpoll. Walt's team - 12 Horned Lark. Carl's team - 27 Tundra Swan. Gary and Jim - 27 Wild Turkey.

What a great day! Thanks to Everyone.

If anyone wants more information, please call me at 814-764-3761.





Conservation Leadership Experience for PA Teens

Spend a week in the field learning from some of the top wildlife biologists and managers in the state! The Wildlife Leadership Adventures is a cooperative program that empowers high school-aged students with the necessary skills and knowledge to become ambassadors for conservation in their home communities.

The Wildlife Leadership Adventures (WLA) is a cooperative initiative involving state agencies and conservation organizations and is coordinated and administered by the Pennsylvania Institute for Conservation Education (PICE). The Program brings the knowledge and expertise of Audubon PA, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Pennsylvania State University, the Ruffed Grouse Society, the Pennsylvania Deer Association, Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA), and the US Army Corps of Engineers directly to high school students.

WLA begins with the residential field camp, where students learn through hands-on field experiences how to track wildlife, identify native plants, evaluate habitat quality, use radio telemetry to study wildlife, and much more. This program helps teens develop important leadership skills such as public speaking, critical thinking, and team work.

PICE will hold two camps this summer at the Raystown Field Station of Juniata College in Huntingdon County. The July 9-13 camp will examine the white-tailed deer from a range of ecological and social perspectives. The July 16-20 camp will make an in-depth study of ruffed grouse to gain a deeper understanding of how forest habitats are important to all life, humans included.

Tuition is \$350, which includes room, board, and educational materials. Don't let tuition costs stop you from applying -- scholarships are available to help defray tuition costs. For more information and to download application materials visit www.PICEweb.org and follow the Youth Programs hyperlink or contact the program director, Gail Farmer, at 610-756-3194; gfarmer@piceweb.org.

Clear Creek State Park News

A major rehabilitation project is anticipated to begin in late spring 2008 at Clear Creek State Park, Jefferson County. Upgrades include a modern restroom building with showers and flush facilities in the campground, two modern comfort stations in the cabin area, and extensive upgrades to the park's aging water and sewage systems.

The rustic cabins, yurts, family campground, and canoe launch will be closed to the public for the duration of construction. During the 2008 season, as construction allows, parts of the overnight areas may be re-opened to visitors on a first come - first served basis.

All park day-use activities will continue during construction including swimming, picnicking, hiking, fishing, and environmental education programs. Some trails and parking areas may be directly inaccessible due to construction work. The public is advised to call the park for updated information on open areas, or check the park's web page at www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/clearcreek.aspx.

As part of the PA WILDS, Clear Creek State Park offers year-round recreational activities on 1,836 acres of forested hillsides along Clear Creek and the scenic Clarion River. Many of the facilities at the park were constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s.

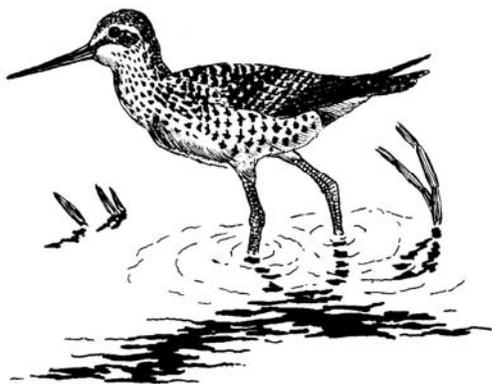
Audubon Exhibit at Binghamton, NY

Roberson Museum and Science Centers presents
the work of John James Audubon
opening Friday, February 1 @ 6:00 pm.

The Audubon Exhibition presents a rare and valuable selection of original letters, books, photographs, personal items, and sixty of his large hand-colored Double Elephant Folio engravings printed from 1826 – 1838 for *The Birds of America*. This exhibition comes to us from the John James Audubon Museum and State Park at Henderson, Kentucky.

Roberson is adding its own dimension to this wonderful exhibition. More than 60 birds from Roberson's Lee J. Loomis Wildlife Collection will be featured along with the Audubon engravings.

Take part in the various activities that are planned for spring – workshops, lectures, nature walks, bird counts and more. Visit our website for more information.- www.roberson.org



*Greater Yellowlegs by Steven D'Amato,
from Audubon Chapter Resources*

Delaware Birding Trail

Internationally known as the Shorebird Capital of the world, the bay shoreline along Kent and Sussex counties in Delaware, in both spring and fall, is teeming with hundreds of thousands of migratory shorebirds. Fall and winter bring hawk migration along with thousands of waterfowl and the snow

goose spectacle, and spring and summer begin with colorful migrant songbirds and end with the breeding season.

A joint project of Delaware Audubon, the Delmarva Ornithological Society, and the Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife, the Delaware Birding Trail consists of 27 of the best birding sites around the state which will allow a visitor of any age or skill level to see and experience the incredible diversity of species and habitat that Delaware offers.

To learn more about the trail, visit
www.delawarebirdingtrail.org

Global Warming Conference 2008

Saturday, April 5, 2008, 9:30am - 3:00 pm

La Roche College, College Center Square
9000 Babcock Boulevard, Pittsburgh
Lunch included

Space is limited, so register today. Learn how you can take action to help stop global warming, with presentations by national, state, and local experts and leaders:

- * Larry Schweiger, President, National Wildlife Federation;
- * Brenda Ekwurzel, Climate Scientist, Union of Concerned Scientists;
- * Representatives from alternative energy, sustainable agriculture, green building, and smart growth fields;
- * Latest global warming policy updates on state and federal levels; and
- * Watch biodiesel manufactured on-site by Steel City Biofuels.

There will be ample time for networking with other global warming activists and groups.

This is a free event for all PennFuture members and students; there is a \$10 charge for others. Become a PennFuture member today and receive free or reduced rates to PennFuture events for a year. See our website at www.pennfuture.org.

Great Backyard Bird Count



The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent. Anyone can participate, from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds.



Participants count birds anywhere for as little or as long as they wish during the four-day period. They tally the highest number of birds of each species seen together at any one time. To report their counts, they fill out an online checklist at the GBBC web site.

As the count progresses, anyone with Internet access can explore what is being reported from their own towns or anywhere in the United States and Canada. They can also see how this year's numbers compare with those from previous years. Participants may also send in photographs of the birds they see. A selection of images is posted in the online photo gallery.

In 2007, participants reported a record-breaking 11 million birds of 616 species. They submitted more than 80,000 checklists, an all-time record for the ten years of the count.

Why Count Birds?

Scientists and bird enthusiasts can learn a lot by knowing where the birds are. Bird populations are dynamic; they are constantly in flux. No single scientist or team of scientists could hope to document the complex distribution and movements of so many species in such a short time.

We need your help. Make sure the birds from your community are well represented in the count. It doesn't matter whether you report the 5 species coming to your backyard feeder or the 75 species you see during a day's outing to a wildlife refuge.

There is also a photo contest, with prizes for the winner in each of the five categories. More prizes will be awarded in a random drawing from all participants.

Go to <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/> for more information and to see the winning photos from 2007.

Audubon Wraps Up 108th Christmas Bird Count

Despite difficult weather in many regions of North America, Christmas Bird Count participants took to the field from 14 December through 5 January, and the 108th CBC is now heading toward the record books. Compilers have until mid-February to complete their data entry, and in the meantime, you can peruse the results of counts as they are completed via the Current Year's Results report.

It will be a very interesting season; while weather likely negatively impacted results in some areas, counters still were able to find interesting species in record numbers in other regions. And a significant movement of "winter finches" southward from the boreal forests of the north is under way this season, to be tracked in its early stages by the 108th Count.

As well as keeping an eye on the Current Year's Results as they develop, we also invite you to use historical results tools on the CBC Web site to peruse detailed bird results over the past century. Or you can take a look at reports from earlier seasons in Christmas Bird Count issues of *American Birds* in the "Annual Summaries" section below.

Check out historical results at <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/hr/index.html>.



*Screech-owls by Stephen D'Amato,
Audubon Chapter Resources*

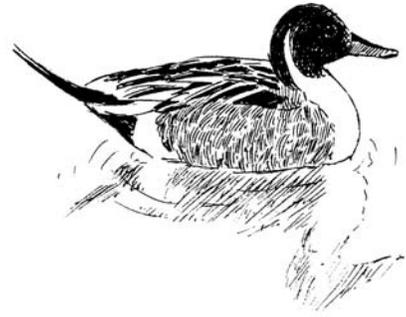
2nd Annual Oil Region Birding Festival

by Gary Edwards

The 2nd Annual Oil Region Birding Festival will be held May 2, 3, and 4 at Venango Campus of Clarion State College. The Keynote speaker at the Saturday dinner will be Mr. Paul Baicich, world class birder, tour guide, and co-author of "A Guide to the Nests, Eggs, and Nestlings of North American Birds".

Field trips will be offered on Saturday and Sunday mornings to Oil Creek State Park, and Buttermilk Hill Nature Sanctuary, and on Saturday to Kahle Lake. Workshops topics include American Woodcock, Bird Houses, Landscaping for Birds, and Hummingbirds. A Friday evening picnic at Oil Creek State Park will be followed by an owl program and an owl prowl.

The events qualify for Act 48 continuing education credits for teachers. For additional information, contact Toni Kresinski, Events Manager, Oil Region Alliance, 800 438-6242, ext. 110.



*Northern Pintail by Kirsten Munson,
Audubon Chapter Resources*

Northern Pintail Travels 6,700 Miles

ESPN outdoor news reports that a duck hunter in the Mississippi Delta bagged a banded Northern Pintail on January 3. He was surprised to find that the tag read "Kankyocho-Tokyo Japan-10A75422."

The Yamashina Institute of Ornithology Bird Migration Research Center confirmed that the pintail was banded near Niigata, Japan, on Feb. 16, 2000, making the duck at least 8 years old.

This is the first time a duck banded in Japan has ever been harvested in Mississippi. It flew about 6,700 miles. Previously, Northern Pintails banded in Japan had been found only in the states of Alaska, Washington, California, Oregon, and Utah.

Biologists at the University of Oldenburg, Germany, have proposed that migrating Garden Warblers may in some sense "see" magnetic fields, thus aiding their long migrations. Their findings strongly support the hypothesis that migratory birds use their visual system to perceive the reference compass direction of the geomagnetic field. See PloS ONE <http://www.plosone.org/home.action> for more information.

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



Planning ahead...

Oil Region Birding Festival - May 2-4.
Birdathon - May 3 through May 11.
PA Migratory Bird Count - May 11
PSO annual meeting in Pittsburgh - May 16-18



Hosting Our Meeting:

February - Joan Magistrella and Carol Riffer

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