



# THE DRUMMER



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

March, 2009

Volume 25, No. 5

**Next Meeting – March 9  
Room 150, Becker Hall  
Social – 6:30 p.m. Program – 7:00 p.m.**

**Mark your Calendar -  
Marcia Bonta in April**



## **Backyard Wildlife Habitat Presented by Pete Dalby**

**P**ete Dalby is providing a National Wildlife Federation program entitled "Backyard Wildlife Habitat" at the March meeting. To complete his presentation, Pete is requesting you to find one to several of your favorite habitat (NOT bird) photos. If you don't have any yet, then take a photo or two before the meeting. If you have a digital camera, send your photos to Gary Edwards at [gedwards@csonline.net](mailto:gedwards@csonline.net) as an attachment to your e-mail and Gary will prepare them for the meeting in a power point mode. Please don't wait until the last minute to send the photos to Gary.

If you have actual photos, Deb Freed has offered to scan any photos sent to her after which she will e-mail them on to Gary. Deb's phone number is 814-226-4719.

**W**e are eagerly looking forward to our April 13 program, to be presented by well-known naturalist and author Marcia Bonta. She is the author of nine books and the popular "Naturalist's Eye" column in *Pennsylvania Game News*. Marcia is an old friend of Seneca Rocks - she presented a well-received program here several years ago. Also, in April 2005, Marcia invited our chapter to an outing at her property, Plummer Hollow, near Tyrone. We enjoyed a beautiful spring day while observing and learning about many species of native plants. Marcia also gave us some insight into how they are managing the property.

## **Conneaut Marsh Field Trip Saturday, April 4, 2009 Trip Leader ?**

~ Jim Wilson, Field Trip Chair

We begin this outing at the spillway bridge at Custards, off Route 285 at 9:00 a.m. Follow Route 322 west from Clarion, through Franklin, to Route 173 near Cochranon. Turn left and follow Route 173 south about 1 mile, through Cochranon and across French Creek, to Route 285. Follow Route 285 about 6 miles to Custards and turn right on Mercer Pike Road. Follow Mercer Pike Road

about a half mile to the bridge. The drive from the Clarion area is as long as to Meadville.

## Oil Creek State Park Warbler Walk

Saturday, April 25, 2009 at 8:30 A.M.

Leader – Gary Edwards

~ Jim Wilson, Field Trip Chair

We meet inside Oil Creek Park. Go 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. The park entrance sign is about thirty-two miles or fifty minutes from the Court House in Clarion. We meet in the Blood Farm day use area parking lot, on the right less than a mile into the park.

Restrooms are available in the day use area and at the park office approximately three miles away. Food is available in Oil City and near the Cranberry Mall.

**Coming up - Presque Isle** – Joint outing, SRAS & Todd Bird Club – May 2.

### Other Events in May

- May 1-3, Birding Festival -Third Annual Oil Region Bird & Nature Festival.
- May 8 - PAMC Pennsylvania Migration Count
- On May 16, Fran Williams will be leading "Birding at Riverstone Farm" in Foxburg. There is a fee for this event, which includes lunch.

The *Drummer* is the monthly newsletter of Seneca Rocks Audubon Society (SRAS), PO Box 148, Clarion, PA 16214. SRAS is a chapter of the National Audubon Society. The *Drummer* is published 8 times per year – September through December, and February through May.

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

Members are encouraged to contribute announcements, articles, photos, etc. to Editor Flo McGuire, 609 Ponderosa Lane, Tionesta, PA 16353 (814 755-3672) or email at [fmcguire1@verizon.net](mailto:fmcguire1@verizon.net).



Lincoln's Sparrow, photo by Carole Winslow

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2008 REPORT

~ Fran Williams

**O**n the morning of January 3, 2009 forty-four members and friends of SRAS took to their perches, feet, or cars and began our annual Christmas Bird Count. It started out as a very cold, overcast day for most participants. However, by early afternoon, some participants reported that they had perfectly clear blue skies. Reported temperatures for the day were between a low of 12 degrees and high of 34.

In the field we had 14 teams with 31 participants, and 10 feeder watches with 13 participants.

### Field team participants:

- Carl & Joan Rowe, and Wayne Meier
- Gary Edwards & Jim Wilson
- Pokey and Kathy Pokrifka
- Walt Fye, Shirley Monrean, & Evelyn Meyers
- Ruth Schurr; John, Gretchen, Emily & Peter Lugthart
- Ron Montgomery, Pat Conway, Ann Hunt
- Carole & Alan Winslow
- Flo & Jim McGuire
- Mike Leahy, Paulette Colantonio, Janice Horn & Erik Dowlan
- Jack & Fran Williams
- Gil Twiest
- Deb Freed
- Peter Dalby
- Erik Dowlan (Erik was part of Mike's team, and also birded on his own, as a separate team.)

**Feeder watchers:**

- Bonnie & Ron Black
- Hendrika Bohlen
- Margaret Buckwalter
- Mary Emerick
- Harry & Jeanne Hakenson
- Bob & Edith Hays
- Sally Hockman
- Dixie Humphrey
- Rheba Klinger
- Charles Marlin

Total count of birds for the day was 9915 individuals and 63 species. Last year we had 10,936 individuals and 55 species. Some of us who were “out in the sticks” noticed that many previous bird feeding stations were not in operation this year and we feared that the total count would be lower than last year. However, as our total shows, it appears that better weather conditions helped us prevail.

Those who kept track of mileage logged a total of 766 miles by car, and 6.5 miles by foot. Driving time totaled 88 hours and walking was 7.5 hours.

**Most abundant:** (500 or more individuals)

- European starlings
- Dark-eyed juncos
- Canada geese
- American crow
- American goldfinches
- Pine siskins
- Black-capped chickadees
- Mourning doves

**Least abundant:** (species in which only one individual was reported)

- Ring-necked pheasant – Carl’s team
- Great blue heron – Jack & Fran
- Bald eagle – Pete
- Eastern screech owl – Ron’s team
- Great horned owl – Carl’s team
- Yellow-bellied sapsucker – Carl’s team
- Common raven – Flo & Jim
- Hermit thrush – Erik
- Northern mockingbird – Carole & Alan
- Lincoln’s sparrow – Carole & Alan (Rare indeed!)
- White-crowned sparrow – Ron’s team
- Common grackle – Carl’s team
- Common redpoll – Margaret Buckwalter
- Evening grosbeak – Carl’s team

**Other species with ten or less individuals:**

- Common merganser – 2 – Carole & Alan only
- Ruffed grouse – 10 – Ron & Erik teams
- Sharp-shinned hawk – 5 – Pokey, Carole, Walt teams, & Feeder watch
- Cooper’s hawk – 5 – Carl & Walt teams
- Red-shouldered hawk – 3 – Gary, Walt & Schurr teams
- Rough-legged hawk – 3 – Ruth & Ron teams
- American kestrel – 9 – Gary, Walt, Ron, Carole, Williams teams
- Barred owl – 5 – Carl, Erik, Mike teams
- Short-eared owl – 5 – Ron & Carole teams
- Northern flicker – 5 – Carl & Ron teams
- Northern shrike – 2 – Carole & Alan only
- Red-breasted nuthatch – 2 – Ron & Mike teams
- Brown creeper – 5 – Walt & Erik teams & Feeder watch
- Carolina wren – 4 – Flo & Twiest teams & Feeder watch
- Golden-crowned kinglet – 6 – Carole & Alan only
- Eastern towhee – 2 – Carole & Mike teams
- Song sparrow – 4 – Carole & Erik teams
- White-winged crossbill – 6 – Deb only

**Species found by only one team or individual:**

Snow buntings – 12 – Ron’s team  
White-winged crossbills – 6 – Deb Freed

**Other Noteworthy Sightings:**

- Walt’s team – 425 Canada geese – 55 Mallards – 94 Red-winged blackbirds
- Carl’s team – 139 Rock pigeons – 469 European starlings
- Ron’s team – 26 Wild turkeys – 102 American tree sparrows
- Erik – 120 American robins – 325 Cedar waxwings – 21 Purple finches

Pileated woodpeckers were in short supply. It required 9 teams and one feeder watch to find 13 birds. Similarly, with White-throated sparrows; only 19 were found by 5 teams and several feeder watches.

Many thanks to Ruth Schurr and Fran Williams for all of their work in assembling and compiling our CBC data.

# Clarion CBC History

~ Flo McGuire

The young Seneca Rocks Audubon Chapter held its first Christmas Bird Count on January 2, 1988, and the young-at-heart chapter held its 22<sup>nd</sup> CBC on January 3, 2009. Using a data chart compiled by Ron Montgomery, the CBC website, and Ruth and Fran's help, some comparisons could be made of our CBCs through the years.



This year's total number of species, 63, is our second highest ever! The highest was in 2001, when we tallied 72 species; our average was 52. The total number of birds, 9906, was our fourth highest total, and also exceeded our average of 7986.

This CBC saw the first occurrence of Lincoln's Sparrow; it was only the third time that White-winged Crossbills were found; the third time for a Bald Eagle; only the fourth time that Common Mergansers or Snow Buntings were reported. This was also a High Count for Snow Buntings, at 12. This year's CBC was the sixth time Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (1), Common Raven (1), or Eastern Towhee (2) were found.

Although we did not have much variety of waterfowl, the total of Canada Geese at 853 was considerably higher than the average of 436, and Mallards at 70 far exceeded the average of 13. Only 34 Wild Turkeys were spotted, while our average for previous years was 102. The Northern Harrier count at 19 was tied with 1999 for a High Count; our average was 6.7. It was interesting that 3 Red-shouldered Hawks were found; these were reported in 8 prior CBCs, but only 1 or 2 each time. Red-tailed Hawks are apparently doing well; 63 were reported, while our average was 38. Five Barred Owls was a High Count; our previous high was 3, and average only 1. Red-breasted Nuthatch numbers were disappointing, with only 2 reported, compared to our average

of 10, and only 6 Golden-crowned Kinglets were found this year, compared to our average of 27.

Eastern Bluebirds had a good showing of 71, the third highest in our CBC history, while their average number was 37. Song Sparrow numbers were our third lowest, at 4; their average was 14. Only 19 White-throated Sparrows were found, while their average over the previous 21 years was 32. The Red-winged Blackbird total of 94 was a High Count, well over our average of 14. The chart shows that House Finch numbers peaked in the early 1990's, and this year's count of 146 was not even half of the average, 389. Pine Siskins are enjoying a banner year; 613 were counted, vs. our average of 19. American Goldfinch numbers have varied a lot over the years, but last year we had a High Count of 1205, and this year was the second highest at 687. The single Evening Grosbeak was the only one reported since our 1999 CBC.

Many thanks to Ruth Schurr and Fran Williams for handling the project of compiling our CBC data. Thanks to Ron Montgomery for sharing his data chart, which included most of the CBC history.

Averages were calculated on the first 21 years. Any errors in calculations or comparisons are mine.

## RECYCLING IN CLARION COUNTY

~ Pete Dalby

As most Clarion folks know, the county arranges a recycling day in the spring and fall at the Clarion County Park. At Leeper, the local Boy Scout group maintains a recycling facility. But there is a relatively new but largely unknown recycling center in the county, the Veolia Environmental Services Transfer Station, located on Rte. 66 between Rt. 322 and I-80.

Veolia's transfer facility is set back and hidden from Rt. 66, but there is a large sign at its service road. I checked Veolia out recently and found their recycling area rather disappointing. First, the Rt. 66 sign has a half dozen lines of information on it, and the fact that the company has a recycling center open to the public is not readily visible to someone

driving by. A stand-alone sign or a different color for the recycling information would make for better visibility. Second, the recycling center has limited hours: Mon-Fri 7am-4pm. Third, I visited during a period of deep snow and it was obvious that Veolia had not removed any from the collection container area for quite some time.

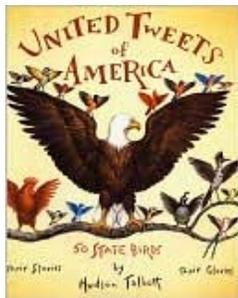
Before visiting Veolia, I had hopes that it might be comparable to the recycling centers at Leeper, Brookville or Center County (off Rt. 144), three recycling facilities which I have visited; however, I was disappointed. Accepted are HDPE and PET plastic, corrugated cardboard (flattened), glass containers (clear, green, brown), aluminum and bimetal cans, and newspapers (no glossy inserts). Magazines, glossy inserts in newspapers, and office paper are not accepted.

Veolia's local telephone number is 814-226-4602.

## Bird Books to be Placed in Elementary Schools

~ Janice Horn

For many years the Clarion County Garden Club has donated generously to SRAS for placing Audubon Adventures in the elementary schools. As demands on classroom time have increased the requests for the Audubon program have declined. Also, last year Deb Freed applied for a grant from Audubon for a different approach of using the program and placed Audubon Adventures in the libraries of several schools. We still had the Garden Club donations and are obligated to use them for education.



Paulette Colantonio, SRAS member and librarian in the Keystone elementary school compiled a list of 6 titles on birds that are appropriate for elementary schools. The schools in Clarion and Forest counties as well as Cranberry and Brookville, 13 in all, have chosen some or all of the books for their libraries. The books are being ordered and will be given to the schools this spring -- a gift from the Clarion County Garden Club and SRAS.



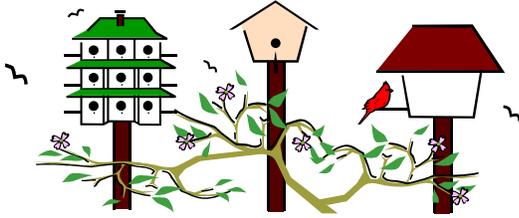
## Campbells Receive Forestry Award

Audubon members Dr. John Campbell and his wife, Beverly, were recognized recently for their strong commitment to sustaining their 81 acres of forest lands for the long-term benefit of future generations. The Campbells reside in southeastern Forest County. They were presented the Maurice K. Goddard Forest Sustainability Award at the PA Forestry Association Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet this past September in St. Marys, PA. This award is sponsored by the PA Sustainable Forestry Initiative Program and recognizes a PA forest landowner who, through exemplary management practices has demonstrated their intent on maintaining their property as a working forest. Additionally, the landowner must make the property available for tours and educational purposes.

John and Beverly have owned their property since 1994 and initiated a formal management plan for the property through the Forest Stewardship program in 1996. The land is enrolled in the American Tree Farm System as well. The Campbells have undertaken several research activities on the property, including an American Chestnut orchard and a demonstration orchard of trees and shrubs for wildlife. Their property is heavily utilized for seminars, workshops and tours.

This July, the Campbells will be hosting the state-wide meeting of the PA Forest Stewards at their home.

Nature abhors a vacuum, and if I can only walk with sufficient carelessness I am sure to be filled.  
~ Henry David Thoreau



## Bluebird/Purple Martin Programs at McKeever

Saturday, March 7, 2009

Harry Schmeider, the Ambassador for the Bluebirds will speak on bluebirds. Harry's presentation will cover history, biology, courtship, nest site, egg laying, brooding and fledgling. Nest box construction and tips for attracting bluebirds will be highlighted. Harry's presentation will be 9 AM - 10:30 AM.

Joe Arnett has been attracting purple martins for 8 years and is forming a Purple Martin Club in the Conneaut Lake area. Joe's presentation will cover proper housing locations, predator guards, nest check, sparrow and starling control and parasites. Joe's talk will go from 10:45 AM to NOON.

These programs are free and open to the public. See [www.mckeever.org](http://www.mckeever.org) or call (724) 376-1000 for more information. **McKeever Center is near Sandy Lake, PA, about an hour's drive from Clarion**

## Nature As A Guide for Dooryard Gardens

A program at McKeever Center - May 8 & 9, 2009  
Act 48 – 12 hours

Gardening is currently undergoing a new emphasis; a return to nature. This field workshop, intended for homeowners, master gardeners, teachers and others who are open to new approaches and challenges in gardening, stresses the ecological value of bringing nature into your home, school or business garden. Learn what, how, when, where and why nature is such an appropriate guide for our home, school or business garden. Learn how to identify neotropical birds on your property and choose the native plants that attract these special species to your garden. Learn to make our gardens more bird and butterfly friendly.

Dr. Gene Wilhelm, retired Professor of Environmental Sciences at Slippery Rock University and Vice President of Education, National Audubon Society, will be our presenter for this event. Gene has taught numerous workshops on natural history topics on five continents. He is currently Volunteer Station Master for the international hawk watch program at Santa Ana NWR, Alamo, Texas, for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

The cost is \$95.00 per participant and includes Friday night lodging, meals (supper on Friday, breakfast and lunch on Saturday), instruction and materials. Registration is required for this workshop. See [www.mckeever.org](http://www.mckeever.org) or call (724) 376-1000 for more information.

## Monumental Land Acquisition for America's Everglades

Florida approved a contract in December to purchase at least 180,000 acres in the Everglades Agricultural Area from U.S. Sugar for an estimated \$1.34 billion. U.S. Sugar will continue its operations for 7 years through a lease from the State. This tract of land, nearly 300 square miles, is slated to be converted from sugar cane fields to reservoirs and water-filtering areas, to finally help restore the original flow of water from Lake Okeechobee to the Everglades. The deal must be finalized before September. This is a long term endeavor that will go a long way toward revitalizing the stalled restoration of the Everglades.

## Help Requested: Heritage Program

Our chapter members enjoyed Dr. Andrew Keth's program at the February meeting, when he discussed the Clarion County Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program and his role in leading this project.

Dr. Keth has a request of our chapter members; he is looking for one or two volunteers willing to serve in an advisory role for the inventory project. It would amount to sitting down with him once in a while so that he can provide updates and the volunteer(s) can let him know what areas or information are missing. Anyone interested can email Dr. Keth at [aketh@clarion.edu](mailto:aketh@clarion.edu).

# Global Warming and the Top Ten Things You Can Do

from the National Audubon Society



Individual choices can have a significant impact on global climate change. Reducing your family's heat-trapping emissions does not mean forgoing modern conveniences; it means making

smart choices and using energy-efficient products. **Americans' per capita emissions of heat-trapping gases is 5.6 tons**—more than double the amount of western Europeans. We can all make choices that will greatly reduce our families' global warming impact.

**1. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!** Do your part to reduce waste by choosing reusable products instead of disposables. Buy products with minimal packaging. Recycle paper, plastic, newspaper, glass and aluminum cans. Aim to recycle half of your household waste. CO<sub>2</sub> reduction = 2400 lbs/year

## 2. Conserve Water

Try to use less hot water.

- Wash clothes in cold or warm water, never hot. CO<sub>2</sub> reduction = 500 lbs/year. When it's time to replace your washing machine, choose a new high-efficiency front-loader.
- Buy low-flow showerheads to save hot water. CO<sub>2</sub> reduction = 350 lbs/year

## 3. Tame the Fridge Monster

New refrigerators use about 50% less energy than those made just 10-15 years ago. Refrigerators account for 10-15% of total home energy consumption. Cleaning the condenser coil regularly can improve the efficiency of your refrigerator by a third.

## 4. Conserve Home Heating and Cooling

Reduce excessive use of home heating and cooling. You'd be amazed at how effective ceiling fans alone can be in making you feel cooler.

- Wrap your hot water heater in an insulating blanket. CO<sub>2</sub> reduction = up to 1000 lbs/year
- Set your thermostat just 2 degrees lower in winter and higher in summer. CO<sub>2</sub> reduction = 2000 lbs/year

## 5. Change Your Light Bulbs

Switch from conventional incandescent bulbs to energy-efficient compact fluorescents. If every U.S. family replaced one regular light bulb with a CFL, it would eliminate 90 billion pounds of greenhouse gases, the same as taking 7.5 million cars off the road.

## 6. Think Before You Drive

Consider taking public transportation, walking, bicycling, or carpooling. Drive a more energy-efficient vehicle. Every gallon of gas you save keeps 20 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> out of the atmosphere.

## 7. Plant a Tree

Plant leafy trees around your house. Each year, the average yard tree cleans 330 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. An average tree absorbs ten pounds of pollutants from the air each year, including four pounds of ground level ozone and three pounds of particulates.

## 8. Buy Locally

As much as possible, buy local produce and other goods. The fewer miles your fruits and vegetables have traveled, the less energy has been used for refrigeration and transportation. Whenever possible, select organic produce. The pesticides used to kill pests also kill the organisms that help keep carbon dioxide in the soil.

## 9. Stand Tall

Yes, your individual actions do add up! You can do a lot to press local and state government, and Congress to curb global warming. Stay informed, write letters to your leaders, raise the issue at Town Hall or district meetings, and support candidates who promise to take the aggressive and farsighted actions necessary to curb global warming.

## 10. Cut Emissions in Your Yard

Gasoline mowers are big polluters and greenhouse gas emitters. Try a manual or cordless electric mower, or be sure to tune up and maintain your gas mower so it runs with fewer emissions. Reduce the amount of lawn you need to mow by planting native species of ground covers, plants and wildflowers, or vegetables.

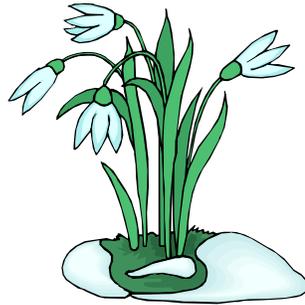
### Hosting upcoming meetings...

Mar 9 - Deb Freed

April 13 - Ruth Schurr and Barb Songer

### Things to do as we wait for Spring...

- Make sure you are caught up on Feederwatch and GBBC data-entry
- Clean and maintain birdhouses
- Conserve water - shower once a week
- Complete any "Special Species Report Forms" for the PBBA
- Get ready for the migrants - listen to Birding by Ear CD's
- Start now and walk to the next meeting



Consider the environment and sign up for e-Drummer today! Call or email Deb Freed at [dfreed208@comcast.net](mailto:dfreed208@comcast.net)

### SRAS Board Members

President --	None	
Vice-president, Programs -	Pete Dalby	782-3227
Treasurer, Birdseed, Birdathon -	Janice Horn	226-7367
Website, Drummer Editor -	Flo McGuire	755-3672
Field Trips, Events -	Jim Wilson	676-5455
Secretary, Membership -	Deb Freed	226-4719
Community Programs -	Ron Montgomery	764-6088
Education -	Paulette Colantonio	797-2031
History -	Pat Conway	849-6315
Mill Creek Coalition -		
Beaver Creek -	Walter Fye	797-1019

### Spring Bird Seed Sale

Official pick-up dates are March 10 to March 14 but you may pick up your seed at any time. Remember that Agway has offered us a 10% discount on bird-related items in the store when you pick up your seed!

*Clarion, PA 16214*

*P.O. Box 148*

*Seneca Rocks Audubon Society*