



THE DRUMMER



www.senecarocksaudubon.org

March, 2008

Volume 24, No. 6

Next Meeting – March 10
Room 150, Becker Hall
Social – 6:30 p.m. Program – 7:00 p.m.

John Bartlett *Presents*
**The Citizens' Wilderness
Proposal for Pennsylvania's
Allegheny National Forest**

John Bartlett, a representative for Friends of Allegheny Wilderness, will outline a bit of the history of the wilderness movement and public lands. He will give us details on the proposal to permanently protect the last remaining roadless and most wild areas of the Allegheny National Forest through Congressional wilderness designation.

John spent 37 years as a journalist, 33 with the *Erie Times-News* covering environmental, conservation and natural resource issues as part of his beat. He joined the Friends of the Allegheny Wilderness one year ago, after taking an early retirement to work on this wilderness campaign. Join us for what is sure to be an interesting program about the nearby National Forest.



Owl Program at Oil Creek State Park



On Thursday, March 6, at 7:00 pm, Gary Edwards will give an owl program at the monthly meeting of the Woodland Owners of Clarion-Allegheny Valley. The program will be held at the Oil Creek State Park Office. An owl walk will follow.

The program is free and the public is welcome to attend.

(Eastern Screech-owl sketch by Steven D'Amato, courtesy of Audubon Chapter Resources)

Cure for Cabin Fever: GBBC Website

Are you among the 80,950 birders who participated in the Great Backyard Bird Count in mid-February? If you haven't already, you are encouraged to go to the website (<http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>) and "Explore the data". There is a wealth of data available, by location, year, or species. Many participants submitted excellent bird photos; these are available for browsing.

If you like a challenge, there is the "Eagle Eyes" game to test your observation skills. Just go to <http://audubon.org/gbbc/game/index.php>.

Upcoming Field Trips

The popular Conneaut Marsh Field Trip is scheduled for Saturday, April 5.

The Oil Creek State Park Warbler Walk will be held on Saturday, April 26.



2nd PENNSYLVANIA BREEDING BIRD ATLAS 2008

by Pat Conway

Expectations are running high at the Powdermill Avian Research Center in Rector, PA. A successful conclusion to the last atlassing year of the 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas is on the minds of everyone there.

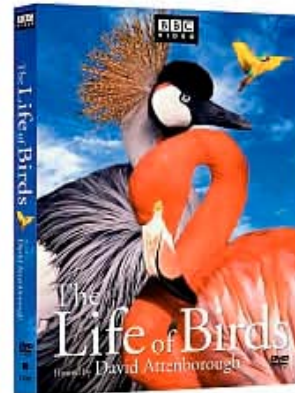
Volunteers are still needed in 2008 to fill in the data gaps for the Atlas Project. Owl and marsh bird surveys need to be done in many of the regions and blocks with low percentages of data could use some revisitation this breeding season.

If you haven't already done so, please consider becoming a night owl for the remaining nights of February and March. Pick a spot and listen for Great Horned, Barred or Eastern Screech Owls. If you don't want to do a toot route, just listen, record and report your findings to your regional coordinator from your own backyard or favorite block. If you want to get more technical, ask your regional coordinator for a CD that plays owl calls and instructions on how to run a successful toot route. These materials will be provided to you. Surveys can be done **in any block** although block 6's are priority.

The same goes this year for marsh birds such as the Sora, Virginia Rail and Pied-billed Grebe. If you are close to a wetland and would like to help detect the presence of these secretive birds, an audio CD and instruction book can be provided to you through your regional coordinator. We need to know about as many of the wetlands that these birds use as we possibly can in order to preserve them. Like the owl surveys, they can be done **in any block** or a block 6. Marsh bird surveys should be done before dark or after sunrise in the spring.

This last year of the BBA, I would like to focus on getting more species for blocks with low percentages of data. I will have some printouts showing blocks in Region 45 that need work at the March meeting. A schedule of BBA outings for June and July 2008 will be forthcoming for Region 45 in the next Drummer.

Many thanks to all of you who have participated in the BBA project over these last four years. It has been a rewarding experience and a privilege to get to know and work with you on this momentous scientific project and a labor of love for the future generations of our avian friends.



If you haven't seen it, I highly recommend you watch the BBC videos, "The Life of Birds" Hosted by David Attenborough. These videos will reinforce why we do what we do for the BBA. Check with your local libraries for these videos.

Hope to see you all in the spring!



Winter 2008 Chapter Networker Now Available Online

The new Winter 2008 Chapter Networker publication is now available online! Full of news, best practices, photos, tools and resources, the Networker is designed specifically for all Chapter leaders.

Read the Networker at the Audubon Chapter Resources website

<http://www.audubon.org/local/index.html>

or download the PDF

http://www.audubon.org/local/cn/pdf/AudubonWinter2008_9.pdf.



PROGRAMS AT COOK FOREST STATE PARK

by Dale Luthringer

'Snowshoe Cook Forest at Night: Fire Tower Rd'

Friday, March 7 at 7:00pm –

Please bring your snowshoes and headlamps and meet at the Nuthole Cabin, located at the entrance of Ridge Camp Campground, for an evening 3 mile interpretive snowshoe program along Fire Tower Rd to Seneca Point. Learn how to identify animal tracks in the snow, search for the elusive AGT-Seneca Point geocache, and explore the Seneca Point cave as we snowshoe under ancient hemlock & oaks in one of Cook Forest's premiere old growth forests. If snow conditions aren't good, we'll hike instead. Snowshoes are not required, although we will have a few pair on hand. Hot chocolate and a luke-warm cabin will be available to warm us up! (2.5hrs)

'Cross Country Ski Cook Forest: Log Cabin Inn-Swinging Bridge'

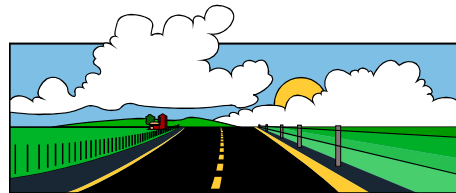
Saturday, March 8 at 9:00am -

Please bring your cross country skis and meet at the Log Cabin Inn Environmental Learning Center for an interpretive cross country ski trip within the picturesque Tom's Run Valley. Learn how to identify animal tracks in the snow as we ski within the old growth forest at the base of the Forest Cathedral, a registered National Natural Landmark. If the snow conditions aren't good, we'll hike instead. Hot chocolate and a luke-warm center will be available to warm us up! (2hrs)

'Snowshoe the Forest Cathedral'

Saturday, March 8 at 12:00pm –

Please bring your snowshoes (not required), and meet at the Log Cabin Inn Environmental Learning Classroom for an interpretive snowshoe hike into the Forest Cathedral. Observe the Longfellow Pine, tallest known tree in the entire Northeastern U.S., learn how to identify old growth forest characteristics and tracks of various animals that call this National Natural Landmark home. Hot chocolate and a luke-warm cabin will be available to warm us up. (2hrs)



DeLorme Gazetteers

Gary Edwards and Jim Wilson have a collection of Gazetteers for most of the states on the east coast and are kindly offering to lend them to members. If you are planning a trip and would like to borrow one, contact Gary or Jim.



BLUEBIRD SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA HOSTS 10th ANNUAL CONFERENCE STATE COLLEGE, PA

For early arrivals on Friday night, April 4, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. a program and social will be held. On Saturday, the All-Day Conference will run from 8:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Join us for this wonderful event, featuring speakers, displays, live auction, raffles, quilt raffle, and luncheon.

Scheduled speakers include:

“Cavity-Nesting Songbirds” – presented by Terry Neumyer. Discover the beauty, fascinating behaviors, and diversity of birds that depend on cavities, both natural and manmade (like nest boxes), to raise their young.

“Conservation and Development of Shelters Used By Bat Maternity Colonies” – presented by Jerry Hassinger. The bat is a creature with fascinating behaviors and nesting needs, is very important to the ecology of Pennsylvania, and serves a very beneficial role. Bats occupy some of the largest cavities (mainly caves) and the smallest crevices (3/8 inch) found in Pennsylvania and elsewhere. They are found in attics, barns, sheds, behind shutters, and in houses specifically designed to accommodate bats. There is a great need to promote the future conservation of bats, and Jerry will discuss the design, placement, and use of bat boxes.

“Purple Martins – How to Promote Nesting Success” – presented by the Purple Martin Conservation Association in cooperation with the Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. This

organization is the only group devoted exclusively to the scientific study of the Purple Martins, their biology, and habitat requirements. This interesting program will focus on the nesting and habitat needs of the Purple Martin, a beautiful and beneficial cavity-nesting songbird that can breed successfully if provided assistance. The program will provide information about the status of the Purple Martin colonies in Pennsylvania and what bluebird landlords can do to assist the Purple Martin species.

“What Bluebirds Love To Eat” – presented by BSP Member, Amy Boyer. This informative program will provide useful information about the many types of food sources, both natural and manmade, that nourish bluebirds during each season of the year. It will also provide tips on how to create a backyard habitat that includes plants and shrubs that produce fruits and berries and also the importance of providing a water source. See their website for a printable conference registration form, <http://www.thebsp.org>.

Help Stop the Killing of Protected Raptors

Last spring, citizens across the country were appalled to learn that thousands of protected raptors such as Cooper's Hawks, Peregrine Falcons, and Red-tailed Hawks had been killed in Oregon, California and Texas.

The raptors were killed by hobbyists who breed pigeons to carry a genetic trait that causes them to stop flying and tumble in the air before righting themselves and carrying on. These "roller pigeons" are flown in competitions and scored by judges who rate the birds on the quality of the "roll" and other factors. Of course, the pigeon rolling through the air looks like crippled and vulnerable prey to a hawk, falcon, or other bird of prey. Many of these pigeon enthusiasts have been routinely killing raptors in an attempt to protect their roller pigeons.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates that as many as 2,000 to 3,000 raptors were being killed on the West Coast each year using methods including poisoning, beating birds to death with clubs, and suffocation in plastic bags. Even more troubling is the fact that the thirteen men charged with these crimes received little more than a slap

on the wrist after pleading guilty. Currently, killing a protected bird is a Class B Misdemeanor under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which puts suffocating a Peregrine Falcon in the same category as unauthorized use of the image of Smokey Bear.

Please ask your U.S. Representative to co-sponsor HR 4093, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act Penalty and Enforcement Act of 2007 to ensure raptors and other migratory birds are given adequate protection.

Representative Peter DeFazio of Oregon has introduced legislation that would amend the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 so that the intentional killing of protected bird species would be considered a felony, rather than the current Class B Misdemeanor. HR 4093 would send a strong message to prosecutors and courts that Congress takes these crimes seriously. It would pave the way for significant fines (up to \$50,000) and jail sentences (up to 1 year) for the most serious bird-related crimes.

We need your help to ensure passage of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act Penalty and Enforcement Act of 2007. Representative DeFazio is currently circulating a "Dear Colleague" letter seeking additional co-sponsors for this legislation.

Please send a letter to your Representative today! Tell your House member that you support stronger penalties for the intentional killing of protected raptors.

For more information –
<http://audubonaction.org/campaign/hr4093>

New York Historical Society Exhibits Audubon's Endangered Birds

New York-The New-York Historical Society will briefly showcase Audubon art depicting some of today's endangered bird species-then pack it up for a decade.

The exhibit, Audubon's Aviary: Portraits of Endangered Species, will run from February 8 through March 16 and display several of

Audubon's original watercolors, including the Peregrine Falcon, Eastern Bluebird, Bald Eagle, and Whooping Crane.

Because of the pictures' sensitivity to light, the New-York Historical Society can only display them briefly every 10 years before they are returned to storage. The society laments that some of these birds may be extinct before the next exhibition.

Click here to see the displayed portraits, complete with MP3s of each bird's call,
https://www.nyhistory.org/web/default.php?section=exhibits_collections&page=exhibit_detail&id=2434283



Rare Birds Yearbook 2009 Competition

Do you have a great photo or painting of any rare birds? Or, have you encountered one and think you can write about it? Submit your entries to the Rare Birds Yearbook 2009 competition for a chance to have your work published in this year's yearbook and a shot at a prize. The photo competition closes May 31, 2008. For every book sold, £4.00 (roughly \$8 US dollars) will be donated to Audubon's partner, BirdLife International, to help conserve these rare species.

Find out which species are eligible at
<http://www.rarebirdsyearbook.com/species.htm>
To learn more or to enter, please visit
<http://www.rarebirdsyearbook.com/competetegories.htm>

Seminar at IUP

Blending field ornithology and molecular ecology to understand chickadee hybridization

Robert. L. Curry, Ph.D.

Department of Biology
Villanova University

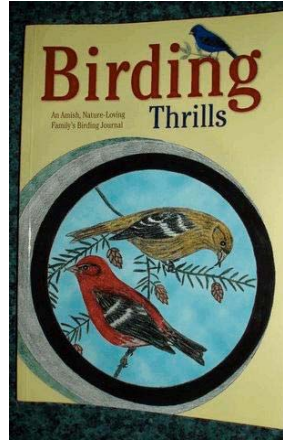
Black-capped and Carolina chickadees are parapatrically distributed, with black-caps resident across Canada and the northern tier of the USA and Carolinas restricted to southeastern USA. The two species overlap along a long, narrow zone of contact from New Jersey to Oklahoma, within which hybridization is common. We and other research groups in Ohio and Virginia use intensive field study of demography and behavior coupled with laboratory analyses of genetic markers to investigate patterns and processes associated with hybridization in these species. Molecular tools provide information about the sex of individual chickadees, mitochondrial haplotypes, and nuclear microsatellite genotypes; we use the latter to assess species identity, population structure, and parentage. The chickadee hybrid system is complicated by close similarity of the parental species; rapid northward movement of the contact zone; the role of learning in song development, which can lead to 'mismatched' vocalizations and 'bilingual' birds; and temporary presence in some winters of irruption black-caps within the contact zone. Results have shown that Carolina chickadees may be preferred as social mates and as extra-pair partners, but we have still not gained full understanding of the proximate mechanisms underlying this asymmetry. Interbreeding by these chickadees is serving as an exciting model for understanding the causes and consequences of hybridization in songbirds generally.

Thursday, March 6, 2008
5:00 PM

Room 107 Weyandt Hall,
Indiana University of PA

Birding Thrills

A book review by Chad Kauffman, a birder from Juniata County, PA.



[Many of you who have attended PSO meetings know Aden Troyer, owner of the Lost Creek Shoe Shop and distributor for fine optics. We've all drooled over his scopes and binoculars at one time or another. Aden has recently received a shipment of the book he has written. He worked with Carlisle Printing, a publisher in Sugarcreek, Ohio.]

Aden's book is called *Birding Thrills*, and on the cover it says, "An Amish, Nature-Loving Family's Birding Journal." His wife did the artwork for the cover as well as all of the artwork in the book. This 232-page book encompasses eight years' worth of birding for which he has kept a journal. These short stories have appeared in Amish/Mennonite publications during that time.

The book's style reminds me of Ned Smith's "Gone for the Day" journals he wrote for *The Pennsylvania Game News*. Many will recognize both the places and the people Aden includes in his book. He includes trips to Middle Creek, Waggoners Gap, Hawk Mountain, and Bombay Hook, as well as tales of Christmas Bird Counts, Migration Counts, and special birds he has seen. He also tells about his start in birding. I view his book as an attempt to spark the interest of birding in today's youth, getting them to pay attention to what is actually going on in nature – if one just takes the time to stop and look and listen. Aden seems to think that hardcore birders may be bored with the book, but I disagree. I think anyone who loves nature will enjoy his stories in monthly chapters.

For anyone interested in purchasing a copy of this book, you may visit him at his shoe shop in Oakland

Mills, call him at 717-463-3117 and leave a message on his answering machine, or write to him at:

The Wonder of Wings
RR 1 Box 586
Mifflintown, PA 17059

The price of the book is \$13.95 plus \$.84 cents tax in PA. Shipping is \$2 if you would like it mailed.

– Chad Kauffman



Birdathon 2008

Start thinking now about a whole day of birding in May. Our Birdathon is scheduled for Saturday, May 3rd, to Sunday, May 10th. Each participant may choose any 24 hour period during those days. Begin your team planning. Our receipts will go to education projects involving local sites such as Beaver Creek and SGL 330 (Piney Tract/Mt. Zion), Audubon Adventures, and a contribution to Audubon Pennsylvania.

I have supplies that you can use in your Birdathon planning: pledge/contribution forms, post cards for contacting sponsors, report forms, bumper sticker, etc. For those who are regular participants I'll have packets ready for you at the April program meeting. For those who want to join us for the first time please let me know and I will give you the materials you'll need.

-Janice Horn (226-7367, jhhorn35@yahoo.com)

Fence Threatens Audubon Sanctuary and Other Critical Habitat

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) plans to build 370 miles of single-tier pedestrian fencing and 300 miles of vehicle barriers by the end of this year along the Rio Grande Valley River corridor as directed by the Secure Fence Act of 2006. Unfortunately, the DHS has routinely waived environmental laws while putting in place a major new fragmentation of borderland habitat. This fence threatens decades of work by Audubon, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, and others that led to the creation of a complex of 90,000 acres of the border's most successful habitat restoration. A long list of species depend on the wildlife corridor along the River for cover and water, including the endangered ocelot and jaguarondi.

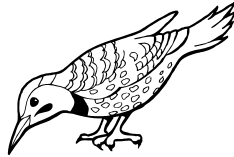
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has said, "Serious, and likely irreparable, wildlife and habitat loss and damage, such as severing genetic exchange and blocking access to water, is likely to result from the placement of 70+ miles of border fence along the lower Rio Grande River that includes refuge lands." The spectacular diversity of wildlife in the area has led to its recognition as a major ecotourism destination and a fundamental economic generator for the Valley.

Among other impacts, the proposed wall would cut the Lower Rio Grande National Wildlife Refuge in half, isolate Audubon's Sabal Palm Sanctuary south of the wall, and trap communities and wildlife populations alike in a virtual 'no-man's land.'

Audubon is working with other affected groups and communities along the river and pursuing options to protect our sanctuary as well as the rest of the carefully networked habitats that provide food, shelter, water, and protection for birds and other wildlife.



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



Planning ahead...

Conneaut Marsh Field Trip - Saturday, April 5
Oil Creek SP Warbler Walk - April 26
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 March Meeting:

Shirley Monrean, Walter Fye,
Joan and Carl Rowe

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
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