

Seneca Rocks Drummer



May, 2005

Newsletter of the Seneca Rocks Audubon Society

Volume 21, No. 8

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

www.senecarocksaudubon.org

Next Meeting - Monday, May 9
Timberwolf Lodge

Membership Celebration - Potluck Dinner
Social & Birding begin at 1:00 pm - Dinner at 6:00 pm

Timberwolf Lodge Membership Celebration

by Jim Wilson, Events Chairman



May 9, 2005 will be the last monthly meeting of the year for SRAS. Bring a friend or someone who may be interested in becoming a

member to the outing at Timberwolf.

A potluck dinner will be at 6:00 p.m. followed by Jack Shontz and his video on Burma. SRAS will provide beverages, snacks and table service. The Lodge will be open at 1:00 p.m. Five dollars per adult will be collected to help defray the cost of renting the lodge.

Come early and have a great time.

If you are coming, and did not sign up, please contact Deb Freed at 814 226-4719.

Please see p. 2 for directions and p. 3 for Burma info.

Field Trips

by Ron Montgomery

May 9 -16	Birdathon
May 14, Sat	Mts Zion & Airy (Grassland Birds)
May 20 -22	PSO meeting (SRAS Hosting)
June 20, Mon	Atlas Block Busting

Saturday, May 14; Grassland Birds at Mt Zion & Mt Airy. We will meet at 7:30AM on top of the hill as you enter Piney Tract by way of Elliot Road. Follow Route 80 to Exit 53 (old exit 7), go south and cross the Clarion River at the Canoe Ripple Bridge. Go a little over a mile past the bridge and take the first left (a scary turn, be careful) on Elliot. Follow Elliot past the houses about a mile to the open grasslands. It is 15 miles and 25 minutes from Clarion. We will finish before noon.

Monday, June 20; Atlas Block Busting. We will meet Flo & Jim McGuire in Oil Creek State Park (Block 30D16) at 8:00AM to do some collective Atlas work. Our meeting place will be the same as for the Oil Creek Warbler Walk. Drive north out of Oil City on Route 8, through Rouseville. The Park entrance is on the right about a mile north of Rouseville, immediately after you cross Oil Creek. Continue on the entrance road to the picnic area parking lot on the right.

At the picnic on May 9, Flo & Jim will have the sign up sheet that we started at our last meeting. The sign up sheet will help Flo & Jim efficiently plan the outing. Please give them a hand by making your best guess on whether you will attend.

Having said that, we understand that plans change. In the final analysis we prefer that you come if you can, regardless of whether you signed up.

We will finish at noon and compare sightings over lunch at a restaurant. Bring a hand radio if you have one, because we expect to be separated. If you have not yet gotten into the Atlas Project, this is your chance to get started with expert help. If you are experienced, we need your help on page 30.



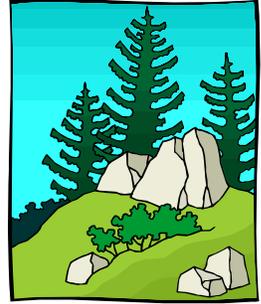
Directions to Timberwolf

Timberwolf Lodge is located off route 66 and sits on the west bank of the Clarion River. **From exit 60 on I-80** (old exit 8), travel north along route 66 to Charles Tool. Turn right onto Doe Run Road, and then turn right onto McClain Watson Road. **From Marianne Corners** (routes 322 and 66) travel south to Charles Tool and turn left onto Doe Run Road, then turn right onto McClain Watson Road. **Timberwolf Lodge** is 1.3 miles ahead. The pavement turns to dirt and takes you down to the parking just above the river.

SRAS Officers		
President	Deb Freed	226-4719
Vice-President	Gary Edwards	676-3011
Secretary	OPEN	
Treasurer	Janice Horn	226-7367
Committee Chairs		
Armchair Activist	OPEN	
Beaver Creek	Walter Fye	797-1019
Conservation	OPEN	
Education	Paulette Colantonio	797-2031
Events Coord.	Jim Wilson	676-5455
Field Trips	Ron Montgomery	764-6088
Membership	Deb Freed	226-4719
Mill Ck/Piney	Pete Dalby	782-3227
Newsletter	Flo McGuire	755-3672

Crow's Nest

by President Deb Freed



Seneca Rocks Rocks!

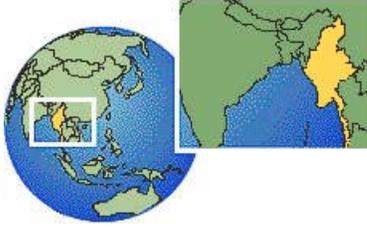
Perhaps you were not aware that each July, the board meets to plan the year and set chapter goals that support our mission to enjoy the world of birds, protect wildlife and its habitat and promote education that fosters appreciation of the natural environment.

Our Audubon chapter status motivates us to publish a newsletter, seek interesting and informative programming, participate in conservation projects and sponsor a variety of educational efforts. The funds we raise support local, state and national initiatives. After all, our natural world connects across county and state borders and we recognize the need for our state and national organizations.

It's good to look at what we've accomplished and what needs to be done. We'll do that in July. We still want more help with events and chapter leadership. We want to be open to all kinds of new members including kids, students, families, and seniors. What do you think we should pay attention to in the coming year? If you have an idea for the planning group to consider, please forward your comments to any of the board members.

As president, I want to thank the members and other supporters for helping SRAS to be the kind of conservation organization any community would be proud to claim.





Dr. Shontz' Video Tape of Burma

SRAS member Dr. Jack Shontz was in Burma (now called Myanmar) on a Fulbright Fellowship teaching science during the academic year of 1955-56. His original 16mm silent films taken with the use of a tripod were converted to video tape and are now part of the film library of the Smithsonian in Washington, where he narrated the tape about 15 years ago.

Dr. Shontz will present this video at Timberwolf after our Potluck Dinner. It is about 2 hours in length - mostly in color, but some in black and white. He was teaching in the Shan States of northeast Burma. Some of the footage was taken in Rangoon and in a few of the cities he and his wife were able to visit on their way home.

They lived in Taunggyi, the capital of the Shan States, which is located at an elevation of just about 5000 feet. Many interesting visitors came there to avoid the heat of the lowlands and were entertained there by the government. Consequently, Dr. Shontz was able to get some rather unique footage of various ethnic tribal dances and other forms of entertainment being put on for the important visitors.

Dr. Shontz states "The film is mostly of an anthropological nature and consequently may not grasp the attention of an audience interested in wild nature, but anyone with an interest in the habits and customs of tribal groups who lived a quite different existence from our own will find the film of some interest and even possibly fascinating".



This will be the last *Drummer* until September. Look for our postcard announcing the annual picnic in August and check our website for news!

PAMC – Saturday, May 14, 2005

by Margaret Buckwalter

The former North American Migration Count, NAMC, has fallen by the wayside but Pennsylvania has decided to keep on counting as PAMC. Our own state migration count is too valuable to let it slide. Last year Pennsylvania received data from over 1,000 participants in 63 of 67 counties. In 2004 the date was the earliest it could be, this year the date is the latest. It will be extremely interesting to see how these two counts will vary.



Wilson's Snipe by Gloria Lamer

The PAMC is like the Christmas Bird Count but it differs in some details. It takes place on a county-wide basis and results are forwarded to a County Compiler. It's only on one day, May 14, this year. It's free. Guidelines: Spend some time in the field counting birds. Keep track of what you see, miles traveled and amount of time spent counting.

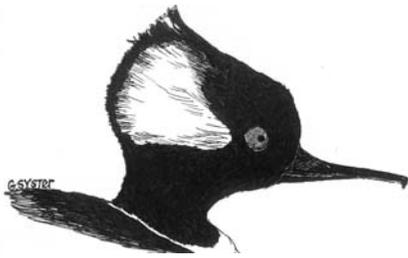
Fill out a simple form and send it to your county compiler. Forms can be obtained from M. Buckwalter, 814-782-3925 or buckwalter01@alltel.net and returned to her at 249 Maple Dr., Shippenville, PA 15254.

The Board realizes that this date conflicts somewhat with our own Birdathon dates, May 6-15, but some people do both on the same day. That's OK if you don't mind filling out the PAMC form while you're Birdathoning. Otherwise, you can go out twice like some other birders do.

Bluebird Boxes at Beaver Creek

It was reported that the nest boxes need some attention. Is there anyone who will volunteer to clean out, repair and generally tidy up around the boxes as soon as possible? Carl Rowe, who has built and maintained boxes at Beaver Creek, suggests that March is really the best month to do the work! We'll get this done earlier next year!





Hooded Merganser by Georgette Syster

Presque Isle Field Trip, April 2, 2005

Notes from Ron Montgomery –

It rained all night before our Presque Isle Trip on April 2 and we awoke to flood warnings. Rain fell with authority as I picked up my grandchildren, and it continued until we got to Edinboro – but then it turned to snow! Mike was undaunted, however, and led a band of 14 hardy birders on what turned out to be a surprisingly good day of birding (mostly from inside the car). Eventually we learned, after getting our laps covered with snow a few times, not to open the car window on the side facing into the wind! Estimates of the snow accumulation for the two-day storm range from 12 to 18 inches.

Attending were: In car 1, Mike Leahy, Gary Edwards, Russ States; in car 2, Shirley Monrean, Walter Fye (even!), Sarah and Harvey Gano; in car 3, Margaret Buckwalter, Hendrika Bohlen, Ray McGunigle; in car 4, Sharon Montgomery, Ryan & Tristen Challener, Ron Montgomery.

Comments and species list from Mike Leahy –

Fourteen brave (or certifiable) souls participated in our annual spring field trip to Presque Isle State Park despite weather conditions that sometimes were comparable to a "white out". The conditions were not the best for birding but we made the best of it and came up with the list of 57 birds below. Not all of the species listed were seen at Presque Isle. "Trip birds" were counted on the way there and back home.

Canada Goose, Tundra Swan, Wood Duck, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal,

Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, White-winged Scoter, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser (Thousands), Wild Turkey, Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, American Coot (Many), Killdeer, Bonaparte's Gull (Thousands), Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Belted Kingfisher, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, European Starling, American Tree Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, American Goldfinch, and House Sparrow .

Conneaut Marsh Field Trip – April 9

by Mike Leahy



Peregrine Falcon by Mike Leahy

With 65 degree temps and beautiful blue skies our trip to Conneaut Marsh/Pymatuning was quite a change from last week's trip to Presque Isle when we had near blizzard conditions.

Not only did the weather cooperate, but the birds did also. On my way to pick up Gary Edwards at

his house near Oil City, Venango County at 7:20 am I saw a hawk in a tree and pulled over to check it with my bins. Imagine my surprise when I realized the hawk was actually a beautiful Peregrine Falcon. I was able to hustle over to Gary's house, pick him up and get back to the spot and show Gary the bird. It stayed long enough for me to get several digital shots through the scope which Gary has posted on his web-site, <http://www.csonline/gedwards/>.

The first stop of the trip at Custards, just off of route 285 between Cochranon and Geneva in Crawford County, produced a nice variety of waterfowl including good views of a Eurasian Wigeon. A life bird for many in the group, including me.

I guess the rest of the day was anti-climactic compared to the first part of the morning but we all had a great day anyway with several of the group getting more than one "lifer" through the day.

Here's what we found – 61 species:

Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Gadwall, EURASIAN WIGEON, American Wigeon, American Black Duck, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Red-head, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, PEREGRINE FALCON, American Coot, Kill-deer, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Pectoral Sandpiper, Bonaparte's Gull, Herring Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Wood-pecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, American Crow, Purple Martin, Tree Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Starling, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Rusty Blackbird, Common Grackle, American Goldfinch, and House Sparrow.

The following people participated in the outing:

Josh Altman, Pat Conway, Gary Edwards, Ann Hunt, Mike Leahy, Anita Mason, Flo & Jim McGuire, Ron Montgomery, Elizabeth & Rosanna Nicholson, Joan & Carl Rowe, Ruth & Karl Schurr, Briana Smrikar.

Briana & Elizabeth are CUP students from Pete Dalby's Ornithology course. Josh is a student at Penn State at Dubois.



Piney Tract - An Important Bird Area

by Deb Freed

The Piney Tract IBA will be set with stops for listening, observing and recording bird activity. Kim Van Fleet from Audubon PA will help us.

A Piney Tract IBA Planning meeting is set for Wednesday, May 25 at noon at BJ's Eatery to be followed by a trip out to the site. SRAS is looking for interested members and friends who might want to take part in the IBA set-up and then learn about reporting the data taken at the point counts. If you want to take part in the planning, please join us.

SRAS BIRDATHON MAY 9-16

by Janice Horn

The Birdathon takes place annually in May and is a fun fundraiser where people get pledges from family, friends, and acquaintances for the number of species that they sight during a 24-hour period in early to mid-May. Kits are available from Janice Horn and include the guidelines, sign-up sheets, contact cards, and other material on hand.



There are several vital steps for a successful Birdathon:

-- First, get sponsors. They can pledge a fixed amount or an amount for each species you find. Face-to-face asking is most effective, but where that isn't possible you can send letters or postcards. The kit includes the sign-up sheets and postcards.

-- Second, determine the 24-hour period between May 9th and 16th that you will be out to find as many species as possible. Get a team together to make the day even more enjoyable. The best counts include many different habitats: open

fields, lakes, swamps, woods, grasslands, etc. And the variety makes the event more enjoyable.

-- Third, collect your pledges and send your Birdathon report to the coordinator. When someone pledges a fixed amount it is often possible to get it at the time they pledge; that makes this part easier. You will still need to collect the remainder and they all enjoy a report. Remember that checks need to be made out to SRAS.

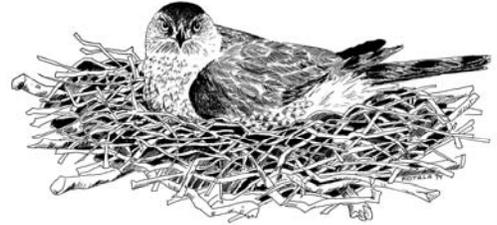
-- Fourth, turn your pledges in to the coordinator by June 15th! Include copies of the sign-up sheets and your report on the species that you identified. And that's it until next year! Thank you.

Each year the SRAS board decides where the proceeds go. It has become a tradition to use part of the funds for Audubon Adventures in classrooms in the SRAS chapter area and we did that in 25 classrooms this year. SRAS has also supported Audubon Pennsylvania with money we raise from the Birdathon. This year we will add the new State Gamelands at Mt. Zion to the projects we support.

This year Seneca Rocks will be competing against its Birdathon records of years past instead of joining, and competing, in the National Audubon Birdathon. We will re-evaluate that decision next year after our 2005 experience and after discussions with Audubon Pennsylvania.

Because we are not participating in the National Audubon Birdathon we cannot offer an NAS membership. However, we can offer a local membership to every non-member who contributes \$20 or more. Local memberships include a subscription to the Drummer, paid participation in the Christmas Bird Count, and the knowledge that you are supporting our various projects.

I am the coordinator again this year and urge you to contact me at 226-7367 or jhhorn35@yahoo.com for additional information and to participate in SRAS Birdathon 2005.



Artwork by Stan Kotala

Second Breeding Bird Atlas

by Flo McGuire

The second year of the Pennsylvania BBA is underway. If you have not already adopted a block, go to

<http://bird.atlasing.org/PA/Main?viewBlocksRegion.s.x=67&viewBlocksRegions.y=12> to see which

blocks are available. In Region 44, which includes Clarion, 16 of 84 blocks have been adopted. We should be averaging 17 blocks per year to finish this project in 5 years. Throughout the state, 1911 out of 4937 have been adopted, or 38%. (Note - No blocks in the state have been marked as "Complete" yet. Bob Mulvihill's criteria include that 25 hours be spent atlasing in each block, and also a trained team is to spend a certain amount of time in each block searching for rails and other invisibirds.)

As of May 1, thirty-one new species are "safe", for a total of fifty-seven species, so it is not too early to be out atlasing. Every 5 or 10 days until the middle of June, more species will be safe. Gary Edwards has prepared a Chronological Safe Date list, so that you can tell at a glance which birds are safe as of a certain date. This form can be printed from our website, www.senecarocksaudubon.org. Scroll down the main page and click on "Breeding Bird Atlas".

You can also print a **Field Card** for your region from this site - we have new field cards this year, designed to facilitate coding and upgrading species, and keeping track of your hours. The bold, italicized and asterisked birds are so marked, because you will need location and notes for these species when entering your data. If you do not have internet access, please call one of the Regional Coordinators to print forms - Mike Leahy at 797-2287, Gary Edwards at 676-3011, Pat Conway at 849-6315, or Flo McGuire at 755-3672.

Want to help? You can either:

- Register as an atlaser at <http://bird.atlasing.org/PA/> and adopt a block- <http://bird.atlasing.org/PA/Main?viewBlocksRegs=1>. When you adopt a block, you are expected to spend 25 hours birding there and to try to include all the habitats in that block. A block is about 10 square miles.
- Register as an atlaser and enter "incidental data" such as sightings in your yard or on your travels- see <http://bird.atlasing.org/PA/>
- Simply notify the Regional Coordinator of your sightings. Information needed is location, date, and species, plus any behavior observed.

As of May 1, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawk, Eastern Bluebird, White-breasted Nuthatch and many other species are safe. A singing male in suitable habitat within the safe dates will be coded as "X" for "Possible". If you see or hear it at the same location 5 or more days later, you can upgrade to a "T" for "Probable".

The "Safe Dates" are intended as a guide, to prevent counting migrants as breeders. "Confirmed" breeding behavior always counts. E.g., if you see a Tree Swallow carrying nesting material, it is a confirmed breeder, regardless of date. When atlasing, every bird you see should be watched for breeding behavior.

The Second Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas is a very important project. It will be interesting to see what changes have occurred since the first Pennsylvania BBA was done in the 1980's.

If you have any questions, please call one of the regional coordinators listed above.



Remember -

An atlasing trip in time saves nine !
Count your confirmations before they're hatched.
A watched block never spoils !
Atlasing every day keeps the doctor away !

A FEBRUARY DAY IN MEXICO

by Gil Twiest



Pale-billed Woodpecker
by Bert Frenz

February 8, 2005; San Blas, Nayarit; Mexico; Clear with temps 65 at night and 85 during the day.

Got up about 5 AM, took a pill and got the coffee on. Soaked my leg in the heating pad for 15 minutes, ate breakfast and got ready

to go. Left the park at 6 AM, just as the sun was starting to rise in a narrow band of clear sky on the horizon. We drove east and a little south away from the coast for about 45 minutes before we turned off on a cobblestone road that led down into a small valley that was the lead into a plantation of coffee, bananas and mangoes mostly intermixed. Parked the cars and saw Magpie-jays above as soon as we got out of the car.

Think of a Blue Jay that is about crow-sized with a set of central tail feathers that extend about 2 and 1/2 feet from the body and you will have an idea of what the jay looks like. They were flying out of the tree tops and circling back with their shorter tail feathers flared out and the longer ones streaming behind. In the early morning light they were beautiful against the blue sky. This was not a new bird for me on this day, but they certainly were nice to look at.

As we started out walking down the road someone spotted a large woodpecker in a tree stub. Pale-billed Woodpecker, it was called. Indeed, it was a male bird of that species and shortly it was joined by the female. These birds are pileated woodpecker-sized with all red heads except that the female has a black stripe over the top of her head. The others had seen this bird, but it was new to me so I took a long look at them with the binoculars and another one with a scope. These are very beautiful birds and the first lifer of the day for me. As we walked along, more birds were seen, such as the Rose-throated Becard, Masked Tityra, and a host of warblers such as Nashville, Black-and-white, and Wilson's.

At a crossroads in the plantation, we took the right turn and went down into a little gully and up the other side past a row of large trees that separated two parts of the plantation. There was a lot of activity in the trees and a Citreoline Trogon was sighted sitting in the open so everyone got a good look at it. Farther up the row of trees the gang was watching a flock of parrots as well as some other birds in a large fruiting tree. When I got up there someone pointed out a male Yellow Grosbeak for me. Another lifer. It is a very beautiful bird which is bright yellow with black wings, white wingbars, and a huge beak. Others had seen it, but not well and the earlier bird seen had been an immature.

Now the parrots were coming out to the ends of the branches to get at the fruit there. They were Orange-fronted Parakeets. These birds are about the size of a Mourning Dove, are mostly green with blue on the wings and the top of the head. The area just above the beak is a reddish orange and a large light colored patch of bare skin surrounds each eye. Parrots are the same color as the leaves on these tropical trees and when a flock flies into a tree and lands, they disappear. It is only when they move around to feed that they can be seen. This flock was easy to see because they were out at the tips of the limbs where the fruit they were eating was located. Third lifer of the day and it was only 9 AM.

As we worked on up the road, several flycatchers were seen and a Thicket Tinamou was heard in the brush. Tinamous are very difficult to see in the brush so they are usually seen by chance crossing the road in front of a person. As we worked on back to the crossroads, a Blue Mockingbird was seen. This was a new bird for several, but I had seen one on an earlier trip so I stayed back. At the crossroads I decided to walk back and get my jeep as my leg was hurting and I wanted to rest it while I had a snack. On the way back an Elegant Trogon flew across the road in front of me. As it flew through a patch of sunlight, the brilliant green back contrasted with the white breast band and the rose-red belly. This sight along with the strange bird calls made a sensory perception to me that indicated that I could not be in Pennsylvania in the summer

although the temperature and much of the terrain was similar. Back with the gang I learned that I had missed a Rufous-capped Ground-sparrow. Perhaps I will get it later in the trip.

While passing the tree where we saw the Yellow Grosbeak and the Orange-fronted Parakeet, one of the gang spotted a little owl sitting in the leaves of the tree. It was a Pygmy-owl, and then another one flew over to the first. They were interacting so we assumed they were a pair. After examining them with the scopes, it became clear that they were the Colima Pygmy-owls and not the more common Ferruginous. This was a good bird, a lifer for everyone in the group including the leaders. It was my 4th for the day. It took a while before everyone quieted down from this one.



Boat-billed Heron
by Bert Frenz

By now it was after 10 AM so we started back toward the cars. I drove mine about halfway back and parked. When the rest of the gang caught up to me I was sitting behind the car in a lawn chair looking at the birds in another huge tree that had a canopy that spread over a circular area about 200 feet across. After several minutes some of the gang started on down for the cars while others were still looking. One lady who had very sharp eyes was scanning a tree across the gully rather than the big tree. She called a strange bird which she thought was a Brown-backed Solitaire. Indeed it was, and it stayed still on its perch until everyone got a good look at it, including the people who had gone on, but came back for the bird. This bird is not brightly colored, but easily identified with its gray breast, brown back and white face markings. It is a difficult bird to get because they do sit so still. The bird was still sitting in the same spot when we left. Fifth lifer for the day. A banner day.

We started on the trip on Jan. 12 and today was Feb. 8 so it was the 28th day of the trip and I had seen 81 life birds, about three a day on average. The total count of all birds seen by anyone on the trip so far was well over 300 species. Most of the birds seen were birds that can be seen in the USA. However, many of these are western birds and I have not birded the western USA extensively so they were new to me. Another large batch of the new lifers for me were indeed Mexican birds.

We got back to the RV Park about noon which was good, because some of us were going to take a boat trip up an estuary in the evening and we had to leave the park about 3:30. After lunch and a nap, 5 of us left for the boat trip. We started up the estuary about 4 PM or so. The first half of the trip was through an extensive mangrove belt and the second half was through high grasses much like the Everglades. We did not see much on the way up because the boats had already made many trips up with groups of tourists. Our boat man was young and did not know the ropes. He stopped at one tree and showed us a Pauraque roosting on a limb for the day. As I was photographing the bird, I noticed another goatsucker on another limb which I pointed out. Then two more were seen. These three were Lesser Nighthawks. I took pictures of both species with the aid of flash.

We did see some nesting Wood Storks, many Anhingas, kingbirds and some hawks on the way up but none were new for the trip. As we approached the end of the estuary, we could hear the groans, grunts and other calls of a roosting rookery. Flocks of ibis and pairs and singles of egrets and herons were flying over us up the estuary. We came around a bend and there were the roosting trees. They were filled with the herons, egrets and ibis that we had seen flying and the noise of their calls was very exotic-sounding. Just past the roost, we stopped at a dock and had our lunches.

About 1/2 hour later, it was totally dark, the stars were shining like a winter night in the PA mountains and the temperature had decreased to about 65 degrees. We started back with the boatman shining his light to help guide him and to look for birds. The first seen was a number of Boat-billed Herons. These small birds have an enormous beak that is broad and fairly deep. They are related to the night-herons and feed after dark. A Lesser Nighthawk was spotted next sitting on a branch by the edge of the open water. Then an orange eyeshine was spotted far down a straight stretch of the estuary. As we got closer the rest of the animal appeared out of the night. It was a Northern Potoo. It is a big bird sitting upright on a vertical dead limb of a tree in the middle of the estuary. It had huge yellow eyes which were averted whenever the brightest lights were put on it. We stopped right near it

and I took several photographs and then spent some time looking at the bird. The Northern Potoo has recently been split off from the Common Potoo that I had seen in Trinidad so it was another lifer, the 6th for the day!

We saw two more potoos on the way back along with some of the same birds seen in the day time. However, the potoos were the birds we had come to see so everything else was more or less anticlimactic. Finished the trip about 7:30 and were home by 8 PM. It had cooled off so after a bite to eat I went to bed because the trip the next day was to start at 6 AM.

Plummer Hollow Field Trip

by Ruth Schurr



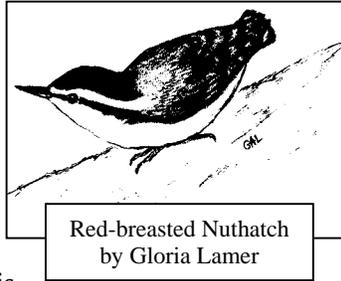
On Saturday, April 23, five lucky Audubon members gathered at the foot of Plummer Hollow near Tyrone to be led up the 1½ mile drive by Marcia Bonta and her son, Dave. We were joined by two members of Juniata Audubon and two PA Native Plant Society members. Although it was threatening rain, we had a wonderful hike, stopping often to see such budding or blooming wildflowers as Purple Trillium (in the hundreds!), Trailing Arbutus, Solomon's Seal, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Rue Anemone, Hepatica, Longspur Violets and Wild Geraniums; also shrubs such as Spice Bush and Red Elderberry. As the elevation increased on our way up, the plant species changed, with lots of Mountain Laurel near the top.

The birders heard or saw Winter Wren, Louisiana Waterthrush, Pileated Woodpecker, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blue-headed Vireo, Dark-eyed Junco, Ruffed Grouse, Northern Flicker, Eastern Bluebird, Eastern Phoebe, White-throated Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Carolina Wren and Eastern Towhee. Marcia guided us through the 3-acre enclosure, which is showing increased understory plants after 5 years. Nearby, she showed us a beautiful orchid, Downy Rattlesnake Plantain. We enjoyed lunch at Marcia's house and as we were leaving the sky cleared and the haze lifted. From Seneca Rocks were Margo Wimer, Carole Willenpart, Flo McGuire, and Ruth and Karl Schurr.

PSO Meeting Reminder

Please see the registration form in your April *Drummer*. You do not have to be a member of PSO to attend the banquet. You do not have to be a member of PSO to help at the SRAS or PSO tables. It is, however, a bargain to join PSO at this time, because \$30 includes meeting registration and a one-year membership in PSO.

To attend the banquet but not the field trips or afternoon sessions, see "Banquet only" on the registration form. Choose an entrée and send in the correct amount for the Banquet only. We will gather at 6:00 pm on Saturday, May 21, for the social, and the banquet will begin at 6:30. Our own Margaret Buckwalter will receive the Earl Poole Award (!) and Seneca Rocks will receive a special Conservation Award!



The PSO Board of Directors, in February, 2005, established the Conservation Award, which may or may not be given annually, "to recognize and reward projects or efforts that significantly contribute to bird conservation in PA". It is being given to SRAS for work involving Piney Tract.

The keynote speaker at the banquet will be PSO member Doug Gross, Wildlife Biologist and Endangered Bird Specialist for the Pennsylvania Game Commission and Coordinator of the PSO Special Areas Project. He will present a program on the Northern Saw-whet Owl.

A few SRAS volunteers will be needed to help at the PSO and SRAS tables at the PSO meeting. Hours are 6:00 to 8:00 pm on Friday, May 20, and noon to 5 pm on Saturday, May 21. Jim Wilson, Events Chairman, will be scheduling the volunteers.

Seneca Rocks Audubon Society
c/o Deb Freed
208 Briar Hill Drive
Clarton, PA 16214