



THE DRUMMER



www.senecarocksaudubon.org

April, 2008

Volume 24, No. 7

**Next Meeting – April 14
Room 150, Becker Hall
Social – 6:30 p.m. Program – 7:00 p.m.**

**Kurt Regester Presents
Amphibian Diversity and
Conservation in Northwest
Pennsylvania**



Red Eft by Flo McGuire

Kurt Regester, a new faculty member at CUP in the area of Vertebrate Ecology, will present our April program.

He will give a presentation focused on species diversity in our region, with particular emphasis on natural history and identification as well as species status and conservation issues. Kurt will briefly discuss the many ecological roles they play in the environment and how these are relevant amphibian population declines that are occurring at a global scale.

Kurt earned his B.S. at Clarion University of Pennsylvania, then worked at several zoos, museums, and wildlife parks as an Environmental Educator. Before returning to graduate school, he served as

Curator of Education at Nashville Zoo and Wildlife Park.

During his M.S. work, Kurt conducted research on behavioral ecology of forest salamanders in Tennessee. During his Ph.D. work, he conducted research on ecosystem ecology of salamanders in Illinois. Kurt's wife, Elizabeth, is a Memphis native. They recently moved from Nashville, TN, where Kurt was teaching at Middle TN State University.

Conneaut Marsh Field Trip Saturday, April 5, 2008

~Jim Wilson

We begin this outing at the spillway bridge at Custards, off Route 285 at 9:00 a.m. Follow Route 22 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.

Editor's note: This has been a popular outing for many years – last year, 50 species were tallied, including Bald Eagles, many hawks, a variety of migrating waterfowl, and some returning passerines. There is very little walking, as we will caravan to several hotspots. Hope to see you there!

Oil Creek State Park Warbler Walk Saturday, April 26, at 8:30 A.M. Leader: Gary Edwards

~ Jim Wilson

We meet inside Oil Creek State 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 32 miles or 50 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 the nearby Cranberry Mall.

Editor's note – this is also a very popular outing, because of excellent habitat and the timing of warbler migration. On a previous trip we tallied 69 species, including 18 warblers.



Wilderness Proposal Program Spurs Action

Based upon the interest shown by the membership at the last meeting where John Bartlett presented the Wilderness Proposal provided by Friends of the Allegheny Wilderness, the board will meet to draft a letter of endorsement towards the FAW's ultimate goals. Bartramian, Lehigh Valley and Tiadaghton Audubon Chapters in Pennsylvania have endorsed this proposal. Obviously SRAS recognizes the role that old-growth forests play in creating habitat needs of many neotropical migrants as well as other avian and mammalian species.

~ Pete Dalby

Friends of Allegheny Wilderness Training Conference Schedule

(tentative)

Friday, April 11

4 p.m. and on – Registration and Welcome

5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. – Food and Fellowship (food will be available all evening for late arrivals)

7 p.m. – Evening programs start (Get to know one another followed by an informative and entertaining presentation.

Saturday, April 12.

7:30 to 8:30 a.m. – Breakfast

9 a.m. – History of the Wilderness Movement

9:30 – 10 minute break

9:40 – The Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest.

10:30 – 10 minute break.

10:40 – The Message, Serving as a FAW spokesperson.

11 – Lobbying skills – How to make the case to our elected officials and preparation for a lobbying trip to Washington. Small group role playing.

12:30 p.m. – Lunch.

1:45 – Community Organizing/Volunteer

Opportunities.

3 – 15 minute break

3:15 – Effective Letters to the Editor and other media tactics OR

Giving the FAW PowerPoint or other public presentations

4:15 – 15 minute break

4:30 – Open discussion of sessions and future individual goals.

5:30 – Optional hike to places of interest at Parker Dam State Park.

6:30 -- Dinner

Sunday, April 13.

7 to 8:30 a.m. – Breakfast

8:45 to 9:45 – Personal Wilderness Action Plan discussion.

10 – Prepare of optional outing to a proposed wilderness area. (Return to Parker Dam mid-afternoon or participants can drive to the site and leave from there).

Friends of Allegheny Wilderness

Volunteer Training Conference Registration

When: April 11, 12 & 13

Where: Parker Dam State Park

Directions from Interstate 80: Take Exit 111 onto Route 153 North for 5.5 miles. Turn right onto Mud Run and then drive 2.5 miles to the park.

Fee: \$30 to be enclosed. Make checks payable to: "Friends of Allegheny Wilderness"

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Special needs (dietary, etc): _____

Food and lodging in historic Civilian Conservation Corps cabins is included. The cabins are equipped with bunks and mattresses; you will need to provide bedding. Weather can be variable in the spring, so check the forecast and be prepared.

I will arrive at approximately: _____

For more information please contact John Bartlett at jbartlett@pawild.org or (814) 676-4474.

Mail form and payment to: John Bartlett, Friends of Allegheny Wilderness, 304 Mayer St., Oil City, PA 16301



REGION 45 BBA UPDATE, 2008

~ Pat Conway

Spring greetings to all Region 45 BBA Volunteers. I recently attended the Regional coordinators' meeting for the 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas in Oil City. There were eighteen coordinators present from western Pennsylvania, including me.

For your info my overview of this meeting, in short, went something like this.

Volunteers who have adopted a block but have not yet submitted any data or done any atlasing in that block, should disown the block so that someone else can adopt it. There are instances where other volunteers would have taken a block, but someone's name was on it. If your name is on a block (and) you have data, but for any reason you haven't been able to enter the data yourself, please send it to your Regional coordinators or Powdermill ASAP, or disown the block so that someone else can take it.

Powdermill realizes that it isn't realistic to think that all the special species surveys can be done before this last season of the Atlas is over, so volunteers can pick and choose where they want to look for owls and marsh birds and just play the CD's. We don't have to spend hours doing it like the protocols say. Find a suitable wetland habitat, play the CD, record the data, and move on. The same goes for owls. Find suitable habitat, play the CD, record data and press

on. If you need CD's, contact me.
bkeeper1@alltel.net, 814-849-6315.

If volunteers have any bold species recorded that they haven't done a Special Species Report for in their blocks, those reports have to be in by the end of this year or they won't count. Examples: red-breasted merganser, northern bobwhite, least bittern, bald eagle, northern harrier, northern goshawk, sora, barn owl, etc. These (Special Species Survey) forms can be printed off the web site and given to your regional coordinator, or e-mailed and sent by regular mail to Powdermill.

Block 6's that are 70-75% complete will be checked as complete by the Regional Coordinators on the website. Other blocks that are 70% complete will also be checked complete if over 20 hours of volunteer effort has been done in those blocks. If you have over xx birds in a block, please check to see if I have marked it complete. If I have, you are still welcome to add more data, but our overall effort would be even better served by working in some of the blocks that have less data.

My approach to this last Atlasing year is going to be different from the previous years. There will not be a formal schedule set up for June/July as before. A week or two before we go atlasing a block, I will notify you by e-mail that we plan to do block such-and-such, with the time and meeting place. You can let me know by e-mail or phone, whether you plan to attend. If you would like to take a block on your own or with a buddy, let me know and I will assign a block to you so that you can do it at your leisure.

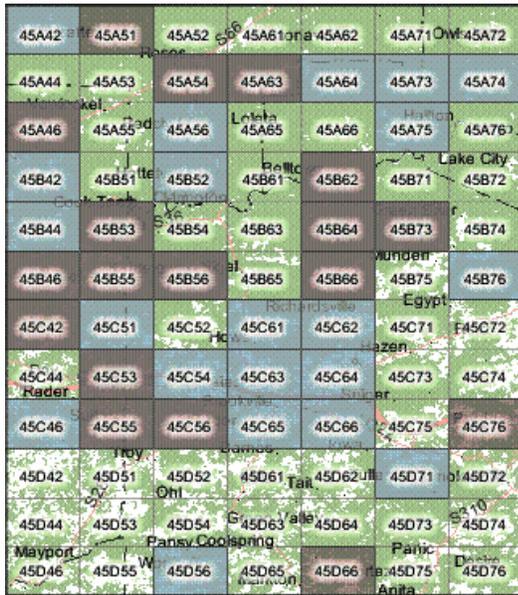
There are many ways you can help with the Atlas Project. Any data you may be able to record is important, whether in your backyard, or somebody else's; with a team, by yourself, or with a friend. Just remember that any way you choose to help the coordinators with this last year of the atlas is greatly appreciated. Volunteerism is the lifeblood of this project, an all-volunteer army, if you will, rising to the call for service.

Birding together is the greatest perk of the 2nd Breeding Bird Atlas Project for me and knowing that

I have helped gather critical data for the preservation of our avian friends is equal to that. I hope to see you all again this season and, as always, wish you good birding and happy memories of it!

Thanks to all of you who have volunteered your time to help with the 2nd Breeding Bird Atlas. Hope to hear from you soon.

Pat Conway
Region 45 Coordinator



Cook Forest Programs

~Dale Luthringer

Ever wonder where some of Cook Forest's more remarkable trees are located? Do you like to explore new places off the beaten path? Ever consider using your GPS unit to find these places?



Two separate "Geo-Tours" will be offered on Saturday, April 12:

**Saturday, April 12 at 9:00am -
'Cook Forest Big & Tall Tree Geo-Tour: Seneca Trail'**

Please bring your GPS (not required) and meet at the Park Office for this short, but strenuous interpretive hike amongst big & tall trees along Seneca Trail. Come view and help measure the Seneca Hemlock – tallest known in the Northeast, and the Jani Pine – one of three known 170ft class white pines in the Northeast. We won't forget about those little-big trees either, such as the Northeast height record and state champ contender witch hazel at 42ft high! (2 hrs)

**Saturday, April 12 at 12:00 noon -
'Cook Forest Big & Tall Tree Geo-Tour:
Foundation Ridge'**

Please bring your GPS (not required) and meet at the Park Office where we will car-pool up-river to begin this strenuous interpretive hike to re-measure big & tall trees along Foundation Ridge. Come view the current Eastern U.S. height record American chestnut, as well as the tallest known pignut hickory and scarlet oak in the Northeast.

REGION 45 SUMMARY 2008

- 18 complete blocks - Pink
- 36 owned (but not complete) blocks - Blue
- 30 unowned blocks - Green

The above is an overview of how we stand in Region 45 going into the last year of the 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas. To date, all of the blocks have some percentage of data in them, however the green blocks have the least percentage of data and more coverage is needed in these blocks. If you would like to see the % for a particular block (Blocks Summary), please let me know and I can e-mail, fax or mail this info to you. It is too large to put in the Drummer. This chart is available to volunteers on the website, but the blocks summary info is only available to the regional coordinators on the website.

Please contact me with any questions or concerns about the BBA at: bkeeper1@alltel.net, 814-849-6315.

2008 Birdathon

~ Janice Horne

Seneca Rocks' annual fundraiser, the Birdathon, is scheduled for the first full week of May, Saturday, May 3rd, through Sunday, May 11th. This event is our largest money raising event, bringing in funds that support our educational projects and Audubon Pennsylvania.

The people who participate in the Birdathon vary from year to year, as does the type of participation. Most of the people who get pledges, spend a day finding species, and follow up with a report are eager to find more people to support them. Those of you who are unable to spend a day birding are probably quite willing to make a pledge and may not know who to give it to. With that in mind I will create a list for the web page and have at the April meeting. Birdathon materials will be available at that meeting also. If you are planning to participate but unable to get to the April meeting let me know and I will get materials to you.

Plan to spend a delightful birding day in May or support your favorite birder.

For a sample of a Birdathon report I am including the one that Paulette Colantonio and I wrote last year.

BIRDATHON 2007

This year Paulette Colantonio and I teamed up to see how many species we could find on Saturday, May 12th. We were up by 5 a.m. and met at Margaret Buckwalter's home at 5:30 where we left one car. The morning temperature was comfortable and we were serenaded by choruses of robins, more numerous by far than roosters; although we did hear some of those, too. Mourning doves were cooing in Margaret's neighborhood.

The Rapp farm on Kiser-Wagner Road was our first stop and we were greeted by a host of species: woodcock, song sparrow, field sparrow, chipping sparrow, towhee, Canada goose, meadowlark, common yellowthroat, grasshopper sparrow, starling,

crow, blue jay, cardinal, and oriole. We were off to a great start.

Leaving Kiser-Wagner, we crossed Rt. 66 and proceeded on to Paint Mills Road which is a wonderful site for seeing and hearing birds. From Rt. 66 to Paint Creek at the bottom of the hill we identified the following: scarlet tanager, wood thrush, red-eyed vireo, chickadee, ovenbird, white breasted nuthatch, hooded warbler, ruffed grouse, hairy woodpecker, Nashville warbler, rose breasted grosbeak, house sparrow, house wren, barn swallow, brown thrasher, phoebe, catbird, and goldfinch.



Black-throated blue warbler
by Stephen D'Amato

We turned toward Shippenville on Banner Road which becomes Schimp Road and were rewarded along that stretch with grackle (yes, every species counts), red-bellied woodpecker, black-throated green warbler, indigo bunting, junco, magnolia warbler,

Blackburnian warbler, yellow-rumped warbler, black-throated blue warbler, and brown creeper.

At the end of Schimp Road we turned north on Allaman Road where the fields yielded bobolink, red-winged blackbird, Northern rough-winged swallow, tree swallow, blue-winged warbler, yellow warbler, and house finch. We made several attempts to identify a persistent repeated "kooee" in some trees along a stream with Paulette making it across the field to try to find it. Her attempt was unsuccessful, but with help from Mike Leahy we decided it probably was a sora (not added to our count since we never did get a look at it and weren't sure that we could identify the call). Also we realized that our hawk identification needed some improvement; we had seen two but neither of us knew what they were.

In Shippenville we saw chimney swifts and south of town we found bluebirds, a green heron, and a black-and-white warbler. It was just 10 a.m. then and we had found 55 species in 4 ½ hours. We went back to Margaret's home to rest, see what she had at her feeders and report to her our sightings. While there we added ruby-throated hummingbird and downy woodpecker.

The morning had been warm and sunny with some clouds, but as we were leaving Margaret the rain

began. We moved both cars to Knox, leaving one there and then proceeded to the Clarion River and Mt. Zion. Things were slower, it was raining and it was getting toward noon when the birds disappear for a while. We did find turkey, bank swallow, and Henslow's sparrow. On the return to Knox via Tippecanoe and Popetown Roads we found red start, blue-headed vireo, Northern flicker, and killdeer.

We hadn't found any water birds except the heron and goose and we wanted to improve our prospects, so we went to Beaver Creek and Kahle Lake. By this time the rain had stopped. At the Beaver Creek ponds we were rewarded with a sighting of wood ducks, in addition to Eastern kingbird, turkey vulture, and a red-tailed hawk. At Kahle Lake an osprey was looking for a meal. On the water there were several species: common loon, tundra swan, bufflehead, ruddy duck, and black duck. On a walk from the gate to the top of the dam we found a great crested flycatcher, and a blue gray gnatcatcher.

The Rhodes' farm on the north side of the lake provided us with a flock of ring-billed gulls, rock doves, and a Savannah sparrow. We got a really close look at the sparrow that was enjoying the water in the little stream.

To close the day we went to Paulette's block for the Breeding Bird Survey on Cogley Road. On the way we checked out the purple martins at the Rex home and there was one there. Cogley Road crosses Cogley Run and is locally known as "The Cogley". It is quite a remote area of more than 200 acres and Paulette mentioned that at first she was reluctant to explore off the road, but now has hiked over many parts of it. The area provided the last species for our list that day, a hermit thrush.

We called it a day at 6 p.m. and thought that with 82 species we had had a fine one. It was rewarding to spend the day with Paulette, an intrepid birder who has a finely tuned ear for bird songs.

Your contribution to Seneca Rocks Audubon Society will help the organization with its programs in nature education. We are looking forward to our Seminar on Non-native Grassland Birds coming up on June 1st. In the next school year we plan to place Audubon Adventures in the libraries of all the elementary schools in our membership area. Thank you for your help.

ARCA Plans Bird Watching Day

ARCA (Allegheny RiverStone Center for the Arts) will have a Bird Watching Day on May 10, 2008 at RiverStone Farm in Foxburg, PA. This very large property

sits between the Allegheny and Clarion Rivers and is home to many species of birds and other wildlife.



Great Crested Flycatcher
by Stephen D'Amato

Fran Williams of the Seneca Rocks Chapter of the National Audubon Society and a member of ARCA will conduct the tour of RiverStone Farm to see and identify birds. The event will run from 9:00 am to 2:00 or 3:00 pm and lunch will be provided at Noon. Fran is a retired biologist who has been birding for more than thirty years and has been active with the Audubon Society for over twenty years. She lived in Foxburg for 13 years and spent many hours tramping through the woods on what is now RiverStone Farm. Since then she and her husband, Jack (also a retired biologist), have birded across the United States and in parts of Canada, Mexico, the Virgin Islands, England, Scotland and Tanzania. Even so, She says that she is "thrilled at the prospect of birding again on the RiverStone Farm. It's a fantastic Place!"

May 10 is International Migratory Bird Day and thousands of birders will take to the fields, forests, seashores, deserts, parks and playgrounds to find birds. You can be part of this exciting event. Come to RiverStone Farm with your ears and eyes wide open, binoculars, and guide book in hand. (A few will be provided). A hat, comfortable walking shoes and a water bottle are also recommended. A camera is optional, however, they tend to interfere with a pleasurable birding experience.

Limited number of reservations. Pre- registration is required, Final date for reservations is **May 1, 2008**. Tickets are \$15.00. For more information and tickets call Sue at (724-659-2546) or if no answer call 724-659-0180.



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

Planning ahead...



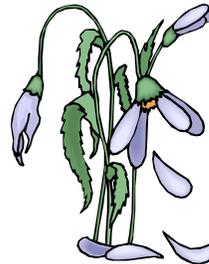
Art by Rosemary Gilbert Bell

- Conneaut Marsh Field Trip - Saturday, April 5
- FAW Training Conference - April 11-13
- Oil Creek SP Warbler Walk - April 26
- Oil Region Birding Festival - May 2-4.
- Birdathon - May 3 through May 11.

- International/PA Migratory Bird Count - May 10
- PSO annual mtg in Pittsburgh - May 16-18

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 |



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