



THE DRUMMER



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Eastern United States Golden Eagle Research Project

Cory Wentzel

September 11 Program

Cory Wentzel is a Forest Assistant Manager with DCNR, Bureau of Forestry, Forbes Forest District based in Laughlintown, PA. He has been with the Bureau of Forestry for 21 years. He will be presenting his involvement with the "Eastern United States Golden Eagle Research Project" spearheaded by Dr. Todd Katzner with the U.S. Geological Survey. Cory managed one of many camera bait sites in the eastern United States. He will show photos of these majestic raptors along with snapshots of other animals

(continued on page 2)

Our meetings are held at the Clarion Free Library, lower level. Come early to socialize—programs begin at 6:30 pm.



Identifying Winter Raptors

Scott Stoleson

October 9 Program

Few of our birds remain here in winter, but where there's food, there will be birds to eat. Aside from the seed and suet we put out at bird feeders for passerines and woodpeckers, most small mammals remain active all winter and attract a variety of hardy hawks and owls. Raptors can be notoriously difficult to distinguish to species, especially under harsh winter conditions. Scott Stoleson will present a program on keys to identifying the hawks and owls that can be found locally during our long winter months.

(continued on page 2)

Golden Eagle Research *(continued from page 1)*

that visited his bait site as well. He will also show a homemade video of capturing and processing a Golden Eagle at his bait site on Laurel Mountain in 2012. "I got to hold the Golden Eagle in my arms which was one of the greatest experiences of my life." Cory states that Golden Eagles are amazing creatures—he has been a birder since he was six years old, but did not know Golden Eagles were spending their winters in our Pennsylvania mountains until he started working with this project.



Winter Raptors *(continued from page 1)*

Dr. Scott Stoleson is the Research Wildlife Biologist with the Forest Service's Northern Research Station in Warren, PA, and a Research Associate of the Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Jamestown, NY. He has published over 65 scientific papers and book chapters on avian biology and conservation based on research in Pennsylvania, the western U.S., and Latin America, and has led natural history tours to the Caribbean and Latin America. His current research focuses on sustaining healthy wildlife populations in managed forests, with emphasis on Cerulean Warblers and forest raptors.

Common Nighthawk Watches

As we go to press, both Common Nighthawk Watches have begun, and will continue through the first or second week of September. Our citizen scientists have found that Common Nighthawk migration along the Allegheny and Clarion Rivers peaks from about August 22 to September 2. You can join Gary Edwards, Jim Wilson and Meg and Nick Kolodick for the 16th year of this tally at the Oil City Marina at the foot of Wyllis Street, or Mal Hays and Larry Towse at the Mill Creek access to the Clarion River. Directions: *In middle of Strattanville turn North off Rt 322 onto Fisher Road, go about 200 yards and you come to three sharp turns in the road. On the third turn Millcreek Road goes straight ahead—follow that road for 2.5 miles to the Clarion River.* Depending on dusk, hours are about 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. Bring your bins and a lawn chair—if it's not a good night for nighthawks, we'll still enjoy the outdoors and have fun talking about birds all evening.



Programming at Cook Forest State Park

~ Dale Luthringer

The *Drummer* is the 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 4 times per year – September, November, February, and April.

The *Drummer* is available on our website in Adobe pdf and may be read or downloaded from the site —

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.

Friday, August 30 at 8:00pm - 'Cathedral: The Fight to Save the Ancient Hemlocks of Cook Forest' An HD short film, produced by Wild Excellence Films, is about the ancient hemlock trees of Cook Forest which are under attack from the hemlock woolly adelgid, a destructive insect that threatens the park's old growth forest, a National Natural Landmark. The film covers threats to the forest and efforts to combat this invasive insect. The film's primary purpose is to educate the widest

possible audience about this issue, inspire action, and raise money for the treatment of the trees. Program will be held at the New Park Office Conference Room. Light refreshments provided. (1 hr)

Saturday, August 31 at 10:00am - ‘Old Growth Forests Series: Tom’s Run Old Growth Area’

Did you know that there are 125 acres of old growth forest along Tom’s Run outside of the Forest Cathedral Natural Area? Many of us are familiar with Tom’s Run, but I doubt many of us are aware of the centuries-old trees that live within this often travelled, but seldom recognized old growth area. Please meet at the Log Cabin Inn Environmental Learning Classroom for an interpretive hike into the old growth forested wetlands of Tom’s Run. (2 hrs)

Saturday, August 31 at 1:00 pm - ‘Tree

Identification’ Do you know how to identify some of the more common trees of Pennsylvania? Do you know how to tell what species a tree is by its bark, shape, leaf type, branch arrangement, odor, and age characteristics? Please meet at the Ridge Camp Park Amphitheater to find out! (1.5 hrs)

Sunday, September 1 at 11:30 am - ‘Fire Tower/ Seneca Point Historical Tour’

Please bring your binoculars and meet at the Fire Tower Parking Lot for an historical interpretive tour of the Fire Tower and Seneca Point. Learn about local logging history, observe Indian sign, and take a breathtaking view from the top of the Fire Tower. (3 hrs)

Saturday, September 7 at 8:00 am - ‘Clarion

River Clean-Up’ Volunteers Needed! Want to help keep our National Wild Scenic and River of the Year clean? If so, please meet at the Pale Whale Canoe Fleet within Cook Forest State Park along River Rd. Registration at the Cooksburg Café from 8:00-10:00 am with a pizza and prize reception for volunteers at 2:00 pm. Bring your kayak or canoe, or one may be provided. Minors must be accompanied by an adult. Must wear good shoes for the river. Alternate date 9/28 pending river conditions. Questions? Please call the Clarion County Conservation District at (814)297-7813. (7 hrs)

Saturday, September 14 at 2:00 pm - ‘Hemlock Woolly Adelgid: Information & Practical

Seminar’ Join Bureau of Forestry invasive insect field specialists for information & field practical on at-home treatment for Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) at the New Park Office Conference Room. Lecture includes the following topics: importance of Eastern hemlock, HWA life cycle, cost of treatment, different treating methods. Practical field session includes: mixing of chemical, use of treatment equipment, chemical application. Program sponsored by the Cook Forest Conservancy. (3 hrs)

Wednesday, September 25 at 7:30 pm - ‘Spotting Pennsylvania’s Elusive White-tail Deer’

Please bring your spotlights and meet at the new Park Office Conference Room for an evening driving tour as we car-pool to Cook Forest’s white-tail hotspots. Come learn about the natural history of our Commonwealth’s state mammal, as we cruise the park searching for this elusive animal. (3 hrs)

Thursday, September 26 at 8:00 pm - ‘Owl

Prowl’ Please bring your flashlights and meet at the new Park Office Conference Room for an evening owl prowl. Explore Cook Forest at night for Pennsylvania’s owls as we car-pool to owl hotspots in the park. Barred, Great Horned, screech and saw-whet owls have been known to make an appearance. (2 hrs)

Saturday, October 19 at 8:00 am - ‘Woodsy Owl Workday’

Have you been looking for a way to get involved with Cook Forest State Park? Please consider joining us for the day to help maintain the park through various work projects. Woodsy Owl and Smokey Bear will be here to help also. Work projects may include invasive species removal, trail maintenance, litter pickup, painting, wood stacking, etc. Free camping Friday and/or Saturday nights will be available for volunteers, with prior notice received by Monday, October 1. If you are planning to join us for the day, please contact the Park Office (814)744-8407 at least two weeks in advance so that we can have a volunteer project lined up for you. Lunch will be provided. (5.5 hrs)

Thursday, October 31 at 7:00 pm - ‘Cathedral by Candlelight’ Want to experience something different this year for Halloween instead of the standard “trick-or-treaters”? Walk back in time with us into the depths of the Forest Cathedral with an historical character from the past. Come view the ancient forest as we walk beneath the giants by candlelight. Either a French Marine from the 1750s who saw these massive trees 250 years ago, or a lumberman from the 1800s will be there to guide us. Candy and hot chocolate will be served at the Log Cabin Inn Environmental Learning Classroom. Bring your flashlights! (2 hrs)

SRAS Annual Picnic Revisited

Our annual picnic at Beaver Creek Nature Area was a balmy summer evening of camaraderie, upcoming plans, and oodles of good food.

Many thanks to Deb Freed for organizing the event and adorning the tables with her own wildflowers. We are also grateful to Mike Leahy as chef, for supplying the grill and all the grilled fare.

Here are some of the many good recipes shared:

Rice Krispie Cookies

~ from Judy Montgomery

Melt 6 oz pkg butterscotch morsels with 1/2 c peanut butter in saucepan over very low heat or microwave.

Remove from heat - add 4 cups Rice Krispies.

Press half into 8x8x2 pan.

Chill while preparing the fudge mixture.

Combine 6 oz chocolate morsels, 1/2 c confectionery sugar, 2 T margarine, 1 T water.

Melt in double-boiler or microwave until well-blended.

Spread over chilled mixture. Spread remaining cereal mixture over top.

Refrigerate. Cut into squares.

ENJOY!

(Just double the recipe for a 9 x 13 pan)

CURRIED SWEET POTATO SALAD

(reprinted from Cathy Fisher’s website, straightupfood.com, with permission)

Serves: 6 to 8 (makes about 8.5 c. salad and 1 c. dressing)

INGREDIENTS

For the salad:

2 pounds sweet potatoes, peeled, and cut into 3/4-inch pieces (about 6 cups)

2 cups coarsely chopped fresh spinach leaves

1/2 cup raisins (brown or golden)

2 ribs celery, sliced or chopped (about 2/3 cup)

1/2 cup sliced almonds (plus extra for garnish)

4 green onions, white and green parts, sliced

Creamy Curry Dressing:

1 teaspoon orange zest

1/2 cup water

2 ounces raw, unsalted cashews (about 1/2 cup)

1/4 cup orange juice

1 teaspoon curry powder

1 medium clove garlic, sliced

INSTRUCTIONS

To start the dressing, zest the orange first before juicing it. Set the zest aside.

Place all of the dressing ingredients, except the orange zest, into a blender and set aside for at least 15 minutes (so the cashews can soften).

To make the salad, place the sweet potatoes into a soup pot and cover them with water. Bring to a boil over high heat, uncovered. Reduce the heat to medium-high, and cook until the potatoes are tender but not falling apart when pierced with a knife, about 10 to 15 minutes. Drain and rinse under cold water, and set aside.

Once the potatoes have thoroughly drained, place them into a large bowl, along with the spinach, celery, raisins, almonds, and green onions.

Blend the dressing ingredients until smooth. Stir the orange zest into the blended dressing with a fork (but don't blend it). Then stir the dressing into the salad. Serve warm or chilled, plain or topped with sliced almonds.





NIGHT SOUND

~ Eastern Screech-owl photo and article by Pat Conway

A day or so before the 4th of July, I was sitting on the front porch, listening to night sounds and thinking about all the years that I've been around to celebrate it. As I was heavy into my contemplation, I heard a strange sound coming from the barn area. I listened for a bit and it sounded like something was in a tree, so I went and got my spotlight and ventured over towards the barn in the dark. The sound didn't stop, so I shined the light all around the tree, circled it slowly and finally found the source. A young screech owl (probably just out of the nest), was begging for food.

My step-niece, Lexi, sitting on my sister's porch next door, saw the light flashing around and hollered over to ask me what I was looking for.

"I heard something in this tree and came over to investigate," I hollered back.

"What is it?"

"It's a young screech owl." I shined the light up in the tree so she could see it, and she said, "Oh. I saw two of those today, up on the telephone wire."

"Really," I said. "Where?"

"Just up the road, I didn't know what they were."

"Can you hold the light on it while I try to get a picture?"

"Sure," she replied and took the light.

The little screech wasn't very cooperative, but I managed to get one fairly good shot of it.

I never know what a day holds here in the country, wildlife-wise, but I try to keep the camera ready, ears peeled and eyes open for anything.

Living in the country you just never know what you're going to hear or see. I love it!

Clarion County Winter 2018-19 Bird Sightings

~ Carole Winslow

Locations: Curllsville (CV), Kahle Lake (KL), Mount Airy (MA), Mount Zion/Piney Tract/SGL 330 (MZ), New Bethlehem (NB), Redbank Valley Trail (RVT), Rimersburg (RI), Strattanville (ST).

Green-winged Teal continue to be regular winter residents at NB on Redbank Creek, where they have been present for at least the last three seasons. Up to four birds were noted there from 12/8-2/26 (J&AK). A more unusual species was also at this location, a single **Long-tailed Duck** from 12/1-12/7 (AD, JH, J&AK). This species was also noted during the same migration period at KL, with one bird seen 12/4 (SG).



Thanks to Meg Kolodick for this Ruffed Grouse photo. Meg reports that one visits her yard in Venango County about once a year.

Ruffed Grouse are now becoming more difficult to find, and this again is the case with only a single report of one in the southern part of *Clarion* 1/11 (DR, MW). For the second year there were also none found on the *Clarion* CBC 12/15. **Ring-billed Gulls** are not really an unusual species for the county but a count of approximately 200 on the rather small waterway of Redbank Creek is worth noting. Likely taking advantage of open water

during the colder end of February, they were present in NB 2/27 (J&AK).

Just a few **Northern Harriers** were noted, as their population continues to be difficult to predict with the severity of winter and likely declining numbers. A single bird was noted at MZ 12/6 (MH), and another at MA 1/6 (DF, BG), both strongholds for this species. One female was also noted at a reclaimed strip mine area near Blairs Corners 2/10 (CW). There are three known nesting sites for **Bald Eagles** in the county, and two adults were present at one of those nests along Redbank Creek near Climax 2/3 (MH, CW). Unfortunately this nest appeared to be in poor shape. In contrast, the nest along the Clarion River near Callensburg appears in excellent shape, with both adults present and active there 2/5 (DM). In line with findings from the state-wide WRS, **Red-shouldered Hawks** seem to be staying around more through the winter with an increase in reports. An immature bird was noted near CV 12/9 (CW), and three were found on a WRS route near Callensburg 1/16 (PC, ML). Two birds were also seen near East Brady, with one feeding on carrion on the roadside 2/3 (DR). Near ST, one was heard calling already near a known nesting area 2/18 (RM). With such extensive grasslands in *Clarion*, it continues to be one of the more regular areas in the state for **Rough-legged Hawks**, and the northern Amish farming communities are becoming the most reliable location. Four light birds were found here near Lake Lucy on a WRS 1/14 (FM), and a dark morph was noted in the same area 1/28 (DD, CW). One light bird was again seen in the area 2/23 (JK, TK). In the south, one light bird was seen on a WRS near Callensburg 1/16 (PC, ML), and two light birds were found at MA on a WRS 1/30 (DD, CW).

More effort was expended this year in the search for **Short-eared Owls** and so higher numbers were found, all in the south on stretches of reclaimed strip mine fields. One was found near Callensburg 12/2,

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one at MA 12/4, and another at MZ 12/6 (MH). Two were seen near CV on Rankin Rd 12/7 and 12/8 (TS, CW), and for the Clarion CBC one was found near Callensburg 12/15 (MH, LT). Later in the season, one was still present at MA 1/26 (DM), and also one near CV 1/31 (CW). A single **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was reported, heard calling from hemlocks in a yard in Knox 12/27 (ML).

Northern Flickers are just occasionally present in winter, and a species map from Cornell's eBird site shows the large area of northcentral Pennsylvania largely missing this species for the season. So it's always interesting to note when they are found, and this year one was seen sporadically at feeders near CV mostly utilizing suet and also frequently seen on larch trees nearby. It was present from 12/6-2/28 (CW). Two birds were also noted early in the season along the RVT 12/14 (J&AK).

Another regular winter visitor that *Clarion* is fortunate to host yearly is the **Northern Shrike**. This year was no exception, with one first found at MA 12/4 (MH), and another in shrubby field habitat near CV 12/7 (CW). In January one was found in overgrown strip fields near Blairs Corners 1/6, and again in this location mid-January (DM). In the same type of reclaimed strip field habitat, one was also found near NB on a WRS 2/3 (MH, CW).

It was a good year for **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, with sightings from multiple locations, including feeders in RI, ST, CV and Clarion through the season (MM, RM, LT, CW, TS). One was also seen at MA 1/27 (NC), and two near NB 2/4 (AD).

Brown Creepers are not always reported, but two spent the entire season at a suet feeder near ST (MH), and one was at a feeder in RI 12/12 (MM). One was also found near CV with a small flock of **Golden-crowned Kinglets** 1/28 (CW).

As with the flickers, **Northern Mockingbirds** are sporadic in winter, with this pattern also visible in species maps from eBird noting their large areas of absence from northwest and central Pennsylvania. Only two were found this year, one near CV 12/11

and another not far from here at a known breeding location 1/28 (CW). Both areas are reclaimed strip mine fields with large areas of multiflora rose.



This excellent Red-breasted Nuthatch image was captured by Meg Kolodick

By far the most interesting event to report this year is the influx of **Evening Grosbeaks** for the first time in many years. First reported in the late fall, they were regular winter visitors at a feeding station near ST throughout the entire season, with numbers reaching at least 40 (LT, RN, CW). At least three banded birds were noted at times, which were marked as part of research being done through the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program at the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and Powdermill Avian Research Center at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History. These birds were first banded at a site in Marienville, *Forest*, as part of a regular flock and it will be very interesting to see over time what this shows about their movements. Twenty birds were also noted at a feeder within a mile of here 1/12 (MH), and at a second feeder also within a mile, up to 15 birds were seen, mostly females, starting 2/19 and continuing through the end of the season (RM). At the second feeder a banded bird was also reported. Without specifics known, there

was a third feeder in this same area that had some birds present as well (fide RM).

There were just two reports of **Pine Siskins**, with one at a feeder near ST 12/4 (RM), and four to five seen at nyger feeders in Clarion 12/8-2/17 (TS). **Snow Buntings** were only found at one location, with a small flock present at farm fields near Tylersburg 1/20 (MH).

The only sparrow of note is one where the report is about the relative absence rather than abundance. **American Tree Sparrows** hit a new low total of 15 on the CBC 12/15. The average number over the past 10 years is 127 (GE). At a feeder near CV which has large surrounding weedy fields, numbers over the last 16 years show a steep decline, especially in the last five years (CW). This species that was often the most numerous feeder bird, with

totals up to 60 during snow events, had a high count this year of nine. A scattering of other sightings was also noted, with four at KL 12/31 (MD), six at Foxburg 1/13 (KC), six at CV strips 1/16 (RN), and two in RI 2/20 (MM). The reasons for the decline seem uncertain at this time.

Observers: **Carole Winslow**, Paulette Colantonio, Nate Crispin, Kurt Crosbie, Michael David, Don DeWolf, Anna Donato, Donna Foyle, Barbara Griffith, Sam Guthrie, Mal Hays, Justin Heasley, John and Avis Keener, Janet Kuehl, Tom Kuehl, Mike Leahy, Dot Monahan, Ron Montgomery, Flo McGuire, Richard Nugent, Dan Richards, Tabassam Shah, Larry Towse, Mike Weible.

“Birding 101”

What every good birder should know & do while birdwatching

When going on a birdwalk you may need more than just binoculars. Here are some suggestions to make your outing more productive and enjoyable.

1. Speak in a soft voice and keep the chit chat to a minimum.
2. Wear a hat.
3. Bring a small pack to carry items you might need.
4. Sun screen is always a good idea.
5. Carry a water bottle.
6. Dress in layers, as the day may warm up while you are out.
7. Wear boots or shoes that you don't mind getting wet. Even if you are not planning on going to a wet area, the grass may be wet early in the day.
8. Carry a bird field guide.
9. Keep perfume and cologne to a minimum. Others in your group may have allergies.
10. When you sight a bird, give verbal directions rather than pointing to the bird. Pointing may frighten the bird.
11. If you must use insect repellent, apply it away from others. Insect repellent is harmful to the coating on binoculars.
12. Avoid wearing white and other bright colors. The birds see color.

Suggestions provided by
Kathie Goodblood of the Bartramian Audubon Society
and Gary Edwards of the Seneca Rocks Audubon Society



*Page from the past— Thanks to Jim Wilson for sharing this document
he found with other old papers.*

Upcoming Dates & Events

September 11 — “Eastern United States Golden Eagle Research Project” by Cory Wentzel

October 9 — “Identifying Winter Raptors” by Scott Stoleson

Till Mid-September — Common Nighthawk Watches at Oil City Marina and Clarion River, every evening. Contact Gary or Mal for details.

Owl Prowl - led by Mal Hays, an evening in the first full week of November, date to be announced.

Looking ahead - Christmas Bird Count, Saturday, January 4, 2020



Leadership Team		
Team Member	Role	Phone
Deb Freed	Team Chair, Media	814-226-4719
Paulette Colantonio	Education	814-797-2031
Pat Conway	History, Facebook	814-752-2036
Gary Edwards	Outreach Programs, Website	814-676-3011
Jeffrey Hall	Facebook	814-518-7050
Mal Hays	Outings Leader	814-764-5645
Janice Horn	Treasurer	814-226-7367
Kay John	Membership	724-526-5960
Danette Karls	CBC Feederwatch	814-764-3251
Mike Leahy	Beaver Creek/IBA 21	814-229-1648
Debbie McCanna	CBC Coordinator	724-526-5693
Flo McGuire	Website, <i>Drummer</i> Editor	814-755-3672
Ron Montgomery	Outreach Programs	814-764-6088
Jim Wilson	Nest Boxes & Feeders	814-676-5455

*I am odorous of the pine forest,
The scent of pine-cones is in my hair.
I smell of wild mint, and the tamarack swamps.
The juice of alder-berries is on my lips, and the brown stain of hazel on my fingers.
I am flecked with the dust of moth-wings, and powdered with the pollen from the hearts of calla-lilies.
I am wind-tawnd and sun-browned.
Wearing the marks of the open.
I reek of freedom.*

~Muriel Strode

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