



THE DRUMMER



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Collin with a Northern Goshawk chick

White-Nose Syndrome and the Incredible Disappearing Bat

Collin Shephard

November 12 Program

Collin Shephard is the Forest Ecologist for the US Forest Service, Allegheny National Forest (ANF) in Warren, PA. The Forest Ecologist role gives Collin exposure to a broad range of resource areas as she is responsible for coordination of the air, water, soils, hydrology, botany, fisheries, and wildlife programs. Additionally, Collin is the ANF's monitoring coordinator and climate change coordinator.

Collin is a native of upstate New York where she attended undergraduate school at the SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry. After finishing her BS in Environmental Forestry &

Biology and pursuing internships in New Mexico and Australia, Collin settled into an Ecology MS program at Penn State. Since taking the Forest Ecologist position on the ANF in September 2010, Collin feels like a jack of many trades, master of none with a developing expertise in hyperdrive multi-tasking and figuring out the foreign; however, she has a particular interest in bats and herps (apparently a sucker for the under-appreciated) as well as landscape ecology and the human dimension aspect of forest land management. *(continued on p. 2)*

Members' Night & Christmas Bird Count

December 10 Program

At our regular meeting location, the Clarion Free Library, we invite members to share pictures, bird gear, books, stories, etc. with a 5 minute spot. We have access to websites and can use your portable drives if you have photos or videos. We will round out the evening by getting ready for the December 27 Christmas Bird Count. Teams will be organized for the routes. Gary Edwards will challenge us to find the birds that have been missing from our counts in recent years. On bird count day, everyone will gather at Cozumel between 5 and 5:30 to have dinner and tally the species and numbers. Deb Freed will collect feeder watcher numbers. It's lots of fun, so come to find out how to participate.

Calendars that were ordered will be available at both the November and December programs. Please pay with cash or checks made payable to SRAS. ~ Deb Freed

White Nose Syndrome, *continued*

She entered the bat world through her work with the ANF's threatened, endangered, and sensitive (TES) species including the Indiana, little brown, northern long-eared, and tri-colored bats. What put many species of bat on the TES species radar is white-nose syndrome, which will be the topic of her presentation: white-nose syndrome and the incredible disappearing bat.

Cook Forest State Park

~ Dale Luthringer

Thursday, October 30 at 7:30pm - 'Cooners & Coyotes' Ever listen to the caterwaulin' whines and growls of raccoons, or witness their territorial antics? Ever hear coyotes callin' in Pennsylvania's Wilds? Please meet us at the Log Cabin Inn Environmental Learning Classroom for a driving spotlight tour to wildlife hotspots in the park. Remember to keep your windows rolled up and fingers inside your car. One never knows what'll show up at night... (3 hrs).

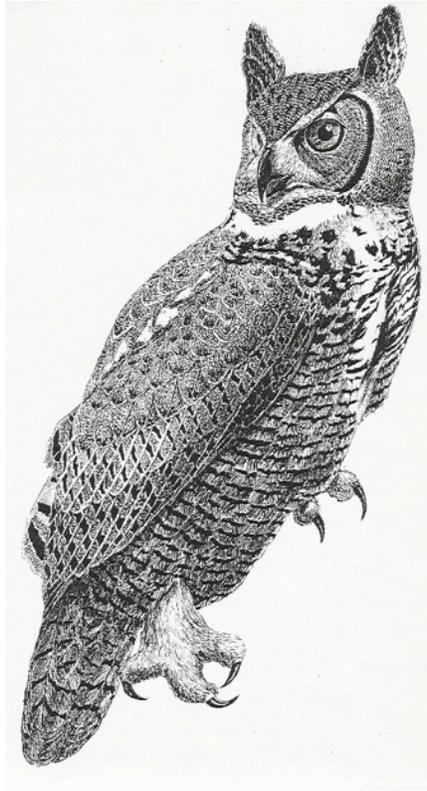
Friday, October 31 at 8:00pm - 'Cathedral by Candlelight'

Want to experience something different this year for Halloween instead of the standard "trick-or-treaters"? Come 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)

Saturday, November 1 at 11:30am - 'Fall Foliage Fire Tower/Seneca Point Historical Tour' Please bring your binoculars and meet at the Fire Tower Parking Lot for a 45 minute historical interpretive tour of the Fire Tower and Seneca Point. Learn about

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

local logging history, observe Indian sign, and take a breathtaking view of the fall foliage from the box at the very top of the Fire Tower which will be open until 2:30pm. This is the last time the fire tower will be open to the public until next season. (3 hrs)



PSO Outing to Allegheny Front

The Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology is sponsoring an outing to the Allegheny Front Hawkwatch that is open to all at no charge.

It will be held on Saturday and Sunday, November 8 and 9. Leaders will be there by about 10:00 a.m. and will probably stay for most of the afternoon. They expect great views of Golden Eagles if the wind is right. Winds out of the east, southeast, and south produce the best flights. Leaders are Mike Lanzone and Chad Kauffman (chadkauffman@earthlink.net).

From Clarion, follow PA 66 South to Kittanning, US 422 East to Ebensburg, US 219 South to PA 56 to Windber, then PA 160 to Central City. At the "T" just past Central City, turn left of Route 1018, Shaffer Mountain Road. At the "Y" turn right on Lambert Mountain Road, then take the second right at the gate opening for the hawkwatch.

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.



The Loggerhead Shrike is a passerine.
Photo taken in Florida by Flo McGuire

The Name Game

~ Gary Edwards

Here's another revised blast from the past.

It's football season and I was going to punt, that is to say I was going to pass on doing this column. But instead, we'll fumble along by intercepting some less than valuable information and hope we don't get penalized.

Joey Slinger, in his "Down & Dirty Birding" has just the right topic--Passerines. Passerine means something along the line of "sparrow" in Latin and refers to a gigantic Order of birds, the Passeriformes. Most of us probably just refer to them as "perching birds," since that's what most sources call them nowadays. Joey says that passerine is a useful term in some respects, for example it obviously doesn't include grebes, since grebes can't perch. But, he says, it's not *that* useful since Great Blue Herons are first-class perchers, as are Wood Storks, and if there are two birds that definitely aren't passerines they are Great Blue Herons and Wood Storks.

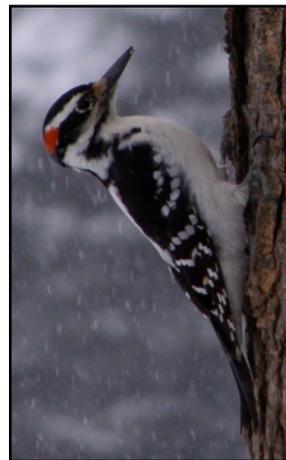
Then there is the sub-order of Passeriformes, the Oscines, or singing birds. Most of the time when we lay people talk about passerines, we're referring to the Oscines....but nobody ever says Oscine unless they're Biology Department faculty. On the other hand, some non-passerine and therefore non-Oscine birds also sing - like the Whip-poor-will. What all this means is: just because a bird perches

or sings doesn't make it one of the perching songbirds, the passerines.

Passerines do have some things in common, all have four toes, three forward and one back. From a behavior standpoint, however, they are quite varied. Most get by on bugs, worms, or seeds but there are some that eat eggs (e.g., Common Grackle), some kill small birds (e.g., Common Grackle), some that are bloodthirsty to the extent that they act more like birds of prey (e.g., Shrikes). Finally, there's the American Dipper that spends much of its life both in the water and under it.

Just for the record, in most field guides the line between passerine and non-passerine is at the flycatchers. Everything in front of the flycatchers is a non-passerine; the flycatchers on back are the passerines. Wasn't that interesting?

Project Feederwatch



Project Feederwatch is a citizen science project operated by the Cornell Lab and Bird Studies Canada. It is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders. FeederWatchers periodically count the birds they see at their feeders from November through early April and send their counts to Project FeederWatch. Data can easily be submitted on the website.

Participants watch their feeders as much or as little as they want over two consecutive days as often as every week (less often is fine). FeederWatch data help scientists track broadscale movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance. This is a unique monitoring tool for more than 100 species that winter in North America, telling scientists where the birds **are** as well as where they **are not**.

The count always begins on the second Saturday of November and runs for 21 weeks. To join, go to www.feederwatch.org. Visit the website to see distribution maps, trend graphs, year-end reports and more.



CUP Planetarium Shows

~ Ron Montgomery

Clarion University will have several planetarium shows this fall that are open to the public and free of charge.

There will be four different presentations entitled "Stars over Clarion" by Clarion University student Will Snyder on September 4 (done), October 2 (done), November 6, and December 4 (the 1st Thursday of each month). Will Snyder gets high praise from Sharon. Each of his programs will begin at 7 p.m. and will describe the night sky for that month.

All of these programs make a good family outing. The planetarium is on the 2nd floor of the Science Center and is wheel-chair accessible. Parking is available in Lots 11 (across from Tippin Gym) and Lot 12 (by Marwick-Boyd). For more information call 393-1899 (Sharon) or 393-2085 (automated Night-sky Hotline).

For information only - There were also four showings of "The Dawn of Astronomy" by Prof. Sharon Montgomery (or one of her students) on Sept. 19 & 20 and October 17 & 18. Sharon's primary research area is exocomets, but she has had a long-time interest in archaeoastronomy as well, especially in ancient Britain.



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Western PA Conservation Conference

Join us for the second annual Western Pennsylvania Conservation Conference (WPACC) on Saturday, November 1st, 2014 at Clarion University of Pennsylvania!

The WPACC is an annual meeting hosted by the Western PA Chapter of the Society for Conservation Biology. In its second year, this year's event hopes to bring together conservationists from the region and challenge them to think more broadly about the difficulties faced in modern conservation efforts. The event will feature a keynote speaker, oral and poster presentations, and a panel discussion titled "Feeding Ourselves, Feeding the Land: Where Agriculture and Conservation Meet." Registration for the Saturday programs is \$25.

It is past the official registration date - please contact Brianna Henry at B.Henry@eagle.clarion.edu if you would like to attend.



Bird feeding tip from Ron Montgomery - build a brush pile of old limbs, etc., in your yard and scatter seed into it all winter and spring. Sparrows and juncos like it, and during migration it collects fox sparrows.

Winter Finch Forecast 2014-2015

Excerpts from Ron Pittaway's comments on the website of the Ontario Field Ornithologists

GENERAL FORECAST: This winter's theme is a "mixed bag" of finch movements. For example, some species such as Purple Finch will go south while White-winged Crossbills will likely stay in the boreal forest in widely separated areas where spruces are laden with cones. Common Redpolls should move into southern Canada and the northern states because birch seed crops are thin to average across the north.

PURPLE FINCH: Last winter many Purple Finches stayed in the boreal forest because of bumper seed crops there. This fall most Purple Finches should migrate south of Ontario because many coniferous and deciduous tree seed crops are much lower in central and northeastern Ontario. When Purple Finches leave Ontario in October and November, they return in mid-April to mid-May to breed. At feeders Purples prefer sunflower seeds. Old-timers remember when Purple Finches were much more common than they are today. The principal cause of the decline may be the absence of large outbreaks of spruce budworm.

COMMON REDPOLL: Expect a moderate to good flight south this fall and winter because birch seed crops are variably poor to average in the boreal forest. At bird feeders redpolls prefer nyger seeds in silo feeders.

PINE SISKIN: Siskins were observed in numbers this summer around southern James Bay and in southern Yukon. They will move east and west this fall searching for areas with excellent spruce cone crops. Siskins should winter in Alaska and north-central Quebec where spruce crops are excellent. However, those that fail to find adequate cone crops will probably wander south where they will frequent bird feeders with nyger seeds in silo feeders. Siskins are often detected by their wheezy clee-ip call, which is the best way to identify them in flight.

EVENING GROSBEAK: Very small numbers of Evening Grosbeaks should move south this winter into southern Ontario and the Northeast because tree seed crops are generally poor farther north. This past summer, Tyler Hoar reports the lowest number of Evening Grosbeaks that he has seen around Lake Superior and in Quebec's Laurentians in four years. Breeding populations are now much reduced from the population peak during the 1940s to 1980s

linked to large outbreaks of spruce budworm. The feeders at the Visitor Centre in Algonquin Park should have some grosbeaks this winter. At feeders Evening Grosbeaks prefer black oil sunflower seeds.

Movements of the following passerines are often linked to the boreal finches.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING: Most Bohemians should stay in the north this winter because the mountain-ash berry crop is generally very good to excellent across most of the boreal forest except in northeastern Ontario. When Bohemians move south they are attracted to berries on European Mountain-ash, small ornamental crabapples and buckthorn berries. With the recent

breeding range expansion east across northern Quebec and the annual abundance of buckthorn berries in settled areas, Bohemians now occur every winter in varying numbers in southern Ontario, southern Quebec and New York State.

RED-BREADED NUTHATCH: This nuthatch is a conifer seed specialist when it winters in the boreal forest. Cone crop failures cause irruptions. It began wandering southward in mid-summer indicating that boreal finches would also move this fall and winter. Many but not all Red-breasted Nuthatches should move south this fall because white spruce cone crops are generally low to average (some bumper crops) across much of the boreal forest. At bird feeders Red-breasted Nuthatches prefer black oil sunflower seeds, chopped peanuts and suet.



This Purple Finch photo from our archives was taken by Margaret Buckwalter.



Upcoming Dates & Events

November 1 through November 7 - Pick Up
Birdseed at J & J Feeds

November 12 Program - Collin Shephard,
White-nose Syndrome and the Incredible
Disappearing Bat

December 10 Program - Members' Night and
CBC Preparation

December 27 - Clarion Christmas Bird Count



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In the blue night
frost haze, the sky glows
with the moon
pine tree tops
bend snow-blue, fade
into sky, frost, starlight,
the creak of boots,
rabbit tracks, deer tracks,
what do we know.

-- Gary Snyder (American poet and essayist),
from Pine Tree Tops

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