

Seneca Rocks Drummer



October, 2005
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Newsletter of the Seneca Rocks Audubon Society

Volume 22, No. 3

www.senecarocksaudubon.org



Next Meeting – October 10
Room 249, Peirce Science
Center
Refreshments & conversation
at 7:00 p.m.
Program begins
at 7:30 p.m.

“Changing Butterfly Fauna in Allegany State Park, NY”

Presenter: Tom LeBlanc

Join us in October as we welcome Environmental Educator Tom LeBlanc and learn more about the delightful butterfly.

Allegany State Park in Southwestern NY covers 65,000 acres of largely forested upland, an area unique in the State for having been ice-free during the Pleistocene glaciation. Extensive studies were conducted by A. A. Saunders in 1920s and 30s on its fauna and flora, including butterflies. Over the last 70 years, however, the Park underwent substantial changes in the land use patterns, forest compositions and other environmental conditions. We report here preliminary results of an on-going survey initiated in 2001 to create a database on the Park’s butterfly fauna and to assess possible

(continued on Page 3)

Allegheny Front Hawk Watch

Thursday & Friday, October 27 & 28, 2005

Jerry Stanley has agreed to join us at Allegheny Front to assist in hawk identification and generally help us get the most from the trip. This year we will meet at the parking lot at the Hawk Watch. You can arrive and leave anytime you wish; I will probably get there about 9:30 AM on Thursday and leave mid-afternoon on Friday. The trip takes about 2.5 hours from Clarion.

The parking lot at Allegheny Front is small so please consider carpooling with someone whose plans correspond with yours.

Some of us plan to stay overnight at the Shawnee, the phone number is 814-733-2828; prices are \$34 to \$45 (same as last year), depending upon the number of people and beds. The McGuires have experience with a motorhome site near Shellsburg; talk to them if you would like to try that option. We will probably go to the Jean Bonnet Restaurant about five miles east of



See Page 7 of the Drummer for the
SRAS Fall Bird Seed Sale form.

Order by Friday, October 21

Pick up at Agway from November 7 through 12



Crow's Nest

by President Deb Freed

Shellsburg on Thursday evening. The convenience store next to the motel opens at 7:30 AM, but the fresh donuts are often not done until 8:00.

The weather can be severe on the Allegheny Front and it can change quickly. We have had snow, intense fog, rain and wind, but most folks say that bad weather and good hawk watching go hand in hand! Since we hope to see lots of hawks, be sure to put your warmest and most water-repellent clothes in the car.

Two hundred red-tails and a dozen Golden Eagles in a day at Allegheny Hawk Watch is not unusual. This trip is always an unpredictable adventure. It has always been fun. I hope you can join us.

Directions – From Clarion:

Take Route 66 South to Route 422; then take 422 East to Route 219 (just west of Ebensburg). Go south on Route 219 to Route 56. Route 56 East will take you to Route 160 at Windber. Take Route 160 to Central City. In Central City, Route 160 turns sharply Right. Don't follow. Go straight on Main Street 0.4 mi to a "T" on Shaffer Mt Road. Turn left. Go one mile to the first Right, which is Lambert Mt. Road. Follow Lambert three miles to a "crossroad" where the main road goes left. Continue straight ahead for ½ mile to a driveway with a blue gate on the right. Follow the driveway to the parking lot.



Did you know?

The turkey was named for what was wrongly thought to be its country of origin.



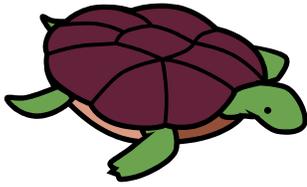
I would like to welcome Dennis Beaver to the officer team for SRAS. Dennis hails from Illinois and now lives in Oil City. He has offered to be our chapter's public relations person. His communications experience and enthusiasm for chapter events will combine to showcase the range of outings and programs for the public. He has many ideas to elevate the public awareness of SRAS to strengthen participation in birding, conservation, education, partnerships and funding.

Another newcomer to the board, Jim Wilson, is expanding his role as events chair. He will be assisting with field trip planning and building nest boxes for our Beaver Creek project, feeders and other avian structures to sell at the annual National Wildlife Week display. These two volunteers have given the board a much needed shot in the arm. Thank you for your willingness to serve. 🐦🐦🐦

SRAS Board Members

<u>Deb Freed</u> , President, Membership	226-4719
<u>Gary Edwards</u> , Vice-president, programs . . .	676-3011
<u>Dennis Beaver</u> , Secretary/Publicity	676-6564
<u>Janice Horn</u> , Treasurer, Birdseed, Birdathon	226-7367
<u>Flo McGuire</u> , Web-site, Drummer Editor . . .	755-3672
<u>Ron Montgomery</u> , Field Trips, Community Programs	764-6088
<u>Jim Wilson</u> , Events	676-5455
<u>Paulette Colantonio</u> , Education	797-2031
<u>Pat Conway</u> , History	849-6315
<u>Margaret Buckwalter</u> , Mill Creek Coalition	782-3925
<u>Walter Fye</u> , Beaver Creek	797-1019

Ruffed Grouse artwork in masthead
by George Miksch Sutton, used with permission.



Audubon Adventures 2005-2006

Seneca Rocks will sponsor 25 classrooms to receive the Award-winning Audubon Adventures science and language arts kits for grades 3 – 6. Audubon Adventures integrates reading with science and other core disciplines meeting national science and language arts standards. Each kit includes a tabloid-style news journal for 32 students focusing on these themes:

- Dragonflies and Damselflies
- Turtles and Tortoises
- Waterbirds
- Spiders

In addition, the classroom teacher will receive a 64-page guide and a one-year subscription to Audubon magazine. To order, contact Deb Freed at dfreed208@adelphia.net. For more information on Audubon Adventures go to www.audubon.org. SRAS will sponsor classrooms in Clarion, Venango, Forest and Jefferson counties.



Butterfly Program, *continued from Page 1*

changes since the last survey. Saunders' record included 52 species as residents in the Park. Thus far, our provisional list contains 58 resident species, including 14 not recorded in the earlier study. Eight of Saunders' resident species, including 3 species described as "common", are yet to be confirmed. These data indicate changing species compositions accompanied by virtual disappearances of a substantial number of species.

Thomas P. LeBlanc has 11 years of experience in Environmental Education and as a Field Biologist. In the early 1990's, he was a volunteer for the National Aviary in Pittsburgh. He became a certified bird bander in 2003 and is currently the crew leader for a Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) station. Thomas is also the Principal Investigator in looking at the changing butterfly fauna and the status and ecology of the Northern Saw-whet Owl in Allegany State Park, NY.

Please join us for an exciting and informative program!



Bird Tails

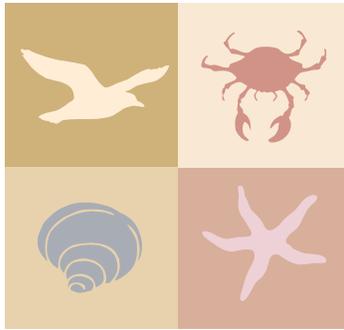
First-Time Birder

by Kim Weaver

When I was about 4 years old, I just had to have a pet bird. I asked my mom and dad but it wasn't going to happen. I had to take things into my own hands. Using basic logic, I figured that I knew how to catch fish using a fishing pole and worms, and birds also ate worms, so perhaps I could catch a bird using the same technique!

Mom was puzzled to say the least when she looked out the window to see me running around the yard waving the fishing pole around in the air, yelling, "HERE, BIRDIE! HERE BIRDIE!!!" Not for the first or last time, she thought I was nuts. I explained my plan to her, and who could argue with logic like that?!

Do you have a "Bird Tail"? Please send to Flo McGuire, fmcguire1@verizon.net for the Bird Tail column in the next Drummer.



Conneaut, Ohio Field Trip

by Deb Freed

How Would You Describe a Perfect Field Trip ?

An ideal field trip has the following elements:

- Good planning
- Easy drive with food stops
- Interesting habitat
- Convenient facilities and close parking
- Easy viewing of birds
- Lots of species
- Good company
- Other birders and no crowds

Well, the field trip to the Lake Erie waterfront at Conneaut Ohio on August 29 had all that and more! The small group of SRAS members were treated to comfortable weather, great learning for those new to shore birds and challenging plumages for veterans.

Except for the elusive Soras, most birds were stationary and provided repeated looks, which were especially helpful to the new, shore bird observers. The Buff-breasted Sandpiper was particularly friendly as it spent a good part of the day in a muddy patch on the beach. Both Gary and Ron were able to take several pictures at close range. Jerry Stanley focused our attention on “the bills” to make some of the more difficult identifications.

What does a Great Lakes steamship captain do while in port? Why, join the beach birders, of course! We enjoyed the company of the captain who bicycled from the dock out to the water’s edge. He told us that a variety of warblers typically ride his ship across the lake but he noticed a decline in the numbers this year. In

addition to the coal he was hauling, he was also taking home a batch of gourds for his Purple Martins. He currently has three nesting pairs and hopes to build a healthy colony at his Ontario home along the St. Lawrence River.

This was the second trip for SRAS to Conneaut and I recommend joining us next year. Attending: Dennis Beaver, Kathie Goodblood, Jerry Stanley, Ron Montgomery, Gary Edwards, Deb Freed

The total species for the day numbered 41:

Mallard
 Green winged Teal
 Blue winged Teal
 Black Duck
 Blue Jay
 Tree Swallow
 Barn Swallow
 Purple Martin
 Yellow Warbler
 American Goldfinch
 Cedar Waxwings
 Rock Pigeon
 American Crow
 Canada Goose
 Killdeer
 Ring-billed Gull
 Herring Gull
 Bonaparte’s Gull
 Little Gull
 Great Black-backed Gull
 Common Tern
 Caspian Tern
 Forsters Tern
 Great Blue Heron
 Green Heron
 Bald Eagles: 4 immature, 1 mature
 Turkey Vulture
 Cowbird
 Double crested Cormorant
 Sora 4 to 6
 Peeps: 3 Least Sandpipers
 1 Semipalmated Plover
 Greater Yellowlegs
 Lesser Yellowlegs
 Black- bellied Plover
 Semipalmated Plover
 Baird’s Sandpiper
 Buff -breasted Sandpiper
 Stilt Sandpiper
 Pectoral Sandpiper
 Sanderling
 Ruddy Turnstone



Book Review

by Janice Horn



I am grateful that Margaret Buckwalter recommended **Birding on Borrowed Time**, by Phoebe Snetsinger, a biography of the woman who was the first person to see and identify 8000 species.

Snetsinger was 34 when she saw a Blackburnian Warbler, and it set her on a path of obsessive birding. For fifteen years she traveled to locations that would yield species that she had not seen. At that point she was diagnosed with malignant melanoma and was given a year or less to live. After coming to grips with this dire prediction she decided to get as much birding done while she was still able to do it. Almost five years later she had a recurrence and, after the necessary medical procedures, she went on as before. And again almost five years after that.

In the meantime she is traveling the world, studying the birds that are expected to be found in each region, making file cards for each one, and adding more species to her lists. If you read this book and like geography you might want to have a world atlas handy. When she reached the competitive goal of 8000: a Rufous-necked Wood-rail in San Blas, in western Mexico, on 9/26/95, she tried to be less obsessive but had made reservations for more trips and went on those, unable to stop.

She was able to support herself in all this traveling through an inheritance from her father. She had the support of her family; the fourth child was almost through high school when she began her trips. Some of her trips were into dangerous territory and she did have some seriously bad encounters.

As Margaret recommended this to me I recommend it to you.



PROGRAMS AT COOK FOREST STATE PARK

by Dale Luthringer

Saturday, October 1 at 2:00pm –

'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 local logging history, observe Indian sign, and take a breathtaking view from the box at the very top of the Fire Tower which will be open until 5:00pm. (3 hrs)

Saturday, October 1 at 7:30pm –

'Stargazing the Night Sky' Please bring your lawn chairs and blankets to the Ridge Camp Park Amphitheater to explore the majestic night sky with Dr. David Hurd, astronomy professor from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Hurd promises that cloudy or rainy weather will not stop participants from learning about the night sky. If weather permits, participants will be outside learning significant constellations and viewing objects through telescopes. If cloudy skies prevail, a make and take project will provide campers with their very own planisphere and the knowledge to use it! In case of rain, program will be held at the Nuthole Pavilion at the entrance of Ridge Camp. (1 hr)

Thursday, October 6 at 6:30pm – ***'Owl Prowl'***

Please bring your flashlights and meet at the Log Cabin Inn Environmental Learning Classroom 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)

Thursday, October 27 at 7:00pm –

'My House is Bugged' Do you have spider webs in your basement? Silverfish in your dishes? Please bring your popcorn bowls and meet at the Log Cabin Inn Environmental Learning Classroom to investigate creepy, harmful, and harmless house bugs in John Acorn the Nature Nut's latest video series.





Encounter with a Boreal Migrant, 9/18/05

by Margaret Buckwalter

It didn't look like a place where a birder might have a one-of-a-kind experience. The dirt road stretched straight ahead with a mature corn field on one side and a field of soybeans on the other. The sun had just set; twilight was beginning. Down the road quite a ways I could see a flock of about twenty robins feeding on something. I checked some trees but they were not over the road so it probably wasn't fallen cherries or other tree fruit. Maybe they were feeding on some insects. I moved the car a little closer. The robins were running around faster than usual and gobbling up some unknown prey on the roadway.

Then I noticed a small bird that kept dodging in and out of the grassy roadside, appearing and disappearing the way sparrows do. This sparrow was yellow though. I moved a bit closer and got my binoculars on the bird again. "Hmm, looks like a warbler and the palm warbler is one that likes to forage on the ground," I said to myself.

At that point a young robin, still with a mottled breast, started chasing the warbler directly up the road to my car. It would chase the warbler for a small distance and then, as the warbler continued to feed, it would chase it again. I held my breath as the robin and the warbler stopped about ten feet from the front of my car. For about a minute I watched the warbler in a frenzy of activity. It constantly wagged its tail while darting about for tiny insects, sometimes even making little leaps into the air as it caught one on the fly. With

satisfaction I noticed that it had the yellow breast, belly and undertail coverts of the eastern palm warbler along with the striped breast and stripe through the eye. I didn't even need binoculars. Then the bird fluttered up to the top of a corn stalk, gleaned something there and disappeared into the corn field.

Birding is like that. One minute is ho-hum and the next minute you're in the middle of an adventure.



Honduras Birding Trip

Marcia Bonta's son, Mark Bonta, and Jesse Fagan are offering another trip to Honduras over New Year's 2006. The dates will be from December 31, 2005 through January 7, 2006. They will spend New Year's Eve at the famous Mayan site of Copan before continuing north to Lago de Yojoa and the north coast. They will be targeting many special birds and, of course, will visit the arid Valle de Aguan for the Honduran Emerald. Please visit their NEW site at www.birdinghonduras.com

Albino Turkey Vulture in New Mexico

Bird watchers have spotted an albino turkey vulture in northern New Mexico at Heron Lake State Park. Heron Lake is known to attract turkey vultures in the fall, but officials say this marks the first time an albino turkey vulture has migrated into the park. Albino turkey vultures are white and have no pigmentation in their eyes and feathers but appear to have pink coloring around their eyes. They often have difficulty seeing, as their eyes can be damaged from overexposure to the sun. Most migratory vultures leave the park in mid-October. They say only two albino turkey vultures have been documented in the United States.

9/22/2005

SRAS Bird Seed Sale

This is your opportunity to purchase quality bird seed from our local Agway dealer and support the conservation, education and environmental activities of the Seneca Rocks Audubon Society. For your convenience, you will have a one week period to pick up your order by checking the SRAS order in the store. If there is any question about your order, please contact Janice Horn.

ORDER BY FRIDAY OCT 21 , 2005
PICK-UP from MONDAY NOV 7 to SATURDAY NOV 12

Mail this order form with check (payable to SRAS) to: Seneca Rocks Audubon Society
c/o Janice Horn
32 Barber St.
Clarion, PA 16214

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ SRAS member Y___ N___

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Quantity	Seed Type	Lbs	Unit Price	Total
_____	Classic Blend 50% sunflower	40 lb	\$18.50	_____
_____	Classic Blend	20 lb	\$ 9.50	_____
_____	Premium Blend 30% sunflower	50 lb	\$14.50	_____
_____	Premium Blend	25 lb	\$ 7.50	_____
_____	Deluxe Blend 25% sunflower	50 lb	\$12.50	_____
_____	Deluxe Blend	25 lb	\$ 6.50	_____
_____	Econo Mix 12% sunflower	50 lb	\$10.50	_____
_____	Econo Mix	25 lb	\$ 5.25	_____
_____	Finch Treat	50 lb	\$30.00	_____
_____	Finch Treat	10 lb	\$ 7.50	_____
_____	Sunflower Blend	50 lb	\$24.00	_____
_____	Sunflower Blend	25 lb	\$13.00	_____
_____	Black Oil Sunflower	50 lb	\$14.00	_____
_____	Black Oil Sunflower	25 lb	\$ 9.00	_____
_____	Grey-Striped Sunflower	50 lb	\$27.00	_____
_____	Sunflower Meats	50 lb	\$37.00	_____
_____	Sunflower Meats	10 lb	\$10.00	_____
_____	Cracked Corn	50 lb	\$ 8.00	_____
_____	Cracked Corn	per lb	\$.30	_____
_____	Niger Seed	25 lb	\$20.00	_____
_____	Niger Seed	10 lb	\$ 9.00	_____
_____	Hanging Suet Feeder	28 oz	\$ 4.50	_____
_____	Hanging P-Butter Suet Feeder	28 oz	\$ 4.50	_____
_____	Beef Suet Cake	12 oz	\$.80	_____
_____	Peanut Butter Suet Cake	12 oz	\$.80	_____

Make checks payable to: Subtotal _____
Seneca Rocks Audubon Society 6% tax _____
Donation to Seneca Rocks Audubon _____
Total _____



Upcoming Meetings -
November 14 - Gil
Twiest, Birding Mexico
December 12 -
Members' Night
February 13 - Genny
Nesslage, CUP's
Vertebrate Collection

Chapter Membership

Seneca Rocks will provide chapter only memberships for an annual fee of \$10. Chapter membership includes a mailed copy of our newsletter, *The Drummer*.

Help Wanted

Openings on the SRAS Board –
Legislation Chair & Membership Chair
Please call President Deb Freed at 226-4719

Thank you to the following hosts
for the coming meetings:



Oct 10 Ruth & Karl Schurr
Nov 14 Walt Fye & Shirley Monrean
Dec 12 OPEN
Feb 13 Judy & Ron Montgomery
Mar 13 Jim Wilson & Gary Edwards
Apr 10 OPEN
May 8 OPEN

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