



THE DRUMMER

www.senecarocksaudubon.org



April/May 2015

Volume 31, No. 4



Fox Sparrow by Flo McGuire

A Birder's Journey from Clarion County

Steve Dowlan
April 8 Program

In the presentation, Steve will describe: the people in Clarion County who have influenced him to become interested in birds and birding; how this inspired him to pursue a career in natural resources management; some of the bird-related projects he has worked on over the years; and how this has all led him to pursue bird photography. The bulk of the presentation will be photos of birds from Steve's birding travels.

Steve Dowlan was born in Oil City and raised in Shippenville. He graduated from the Flexible All-Year School at Clarion University, and later earned a

BS degree in Natural Resources from Oregon State University. He began his career in natural resource management monitoring northern spotted owls with the USDI Bureau of Land Management in Salem, Oregon. Over his 24 year career with the Bureau of Land Management and the USDA Forest Service, he has worked on projects involving harlequin ducks, fox sparrows, willow flycatchers, terrestrial salamanders and terrestrial mollusks. He operated a MAPS bird banding station in the western Cascades of Oregon for seven years. He is currently a supervisory natural resource specialist for the Bradford Ranger District, Allegheny National Forest.

Warbler Identification

Gary Edwards & Ron Montgomery

May 13 Program

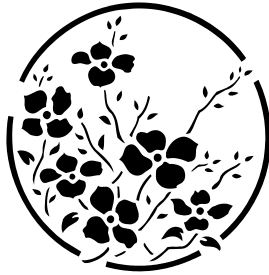
Gary and Ron will again team up to get us ready for the annual Warbler Walk at Oil Creek State Park, which is scheduled for Saturday, May 23. The program will feature the warblers most likely to be found at Oil Creek Park. Attention will be paid to the habitat, songs and behavior of these warblers.

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

One specialty is the Canada Warbler, which has nested at Oil Creek State Park. Other warblers we have seen there are: Ovenbird, Louisiana and Northern Waterthrush, Blue-winged Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Hooded Warbler, American Redstart, Cerulean Warbler, Northern Parula, Magnolia, Blackburnian, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Blue, Yellow-rumped, and Black-throated Green.

Addition To CBC Report

Apologies from the editor - the names of the CBC feeder watchers were inadvertently omitted from the article in the last *Drummer*. Feederwatchers were: Henricka Bohlen, Cindy Bonner, Ted Buckwalter, Dorothy Flick, Ben Freed, Irwin Henry, Susan Joy, Reba Klingler, Charles Marlin, Kathy Poprifka, Carol Riffer, Linda Twiest, and Dee Wenner.



Foxburg Nature Festival

~ Ron Montgomery

The Nature Festival will be on May 16th and 17th. Mark it on your calendar. While details are still being worked on, activities we are planning for Saturday the 16th include an early morning birding walk, a botanical nature walk on the RiverStone estate, a butterfly release, pontoon rides on the river, perhaps a nature walk near Emlenton and Mike Leahy's very popular evening owl prowl. We expect to continue the well-attended all-morning pancake breakfast and our own Jeff Hall will be the evening speaker (Galapagos). Canoeing and fishing activities are being planned for Sunday the 17th, along with a 5K race on the RiverStone property. SRAS is co-sponsoring the Nature Festival again this year and several members are involved in its planning.



Prairie Warbler photo by Jeff Hall

Oil Creek State Park Warbler Walk

~ Jim Wilson

Saturday May 23, 2015 at 8:30 a.m.

We meet inside Oil Creek 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 thirty-two miles or fifty 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 near the Cranberry mall.

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.

Spotted Salamander Walk

~ Ron Montgomery

Professor Kurt Regester has offered to lead a night time spotted salamander walk when the conditions are right. Historically that occurs roughly the first week of April, but rain and temperature conditions are also a factor. We expect to do it on the bike trail at Van. Our plan is to wait for the right conditions and make a quick email announcement. Watch your email.



You might see a Red-shouldered Hawk on your Birdathon or PAMC.

2015 Birdathon

~Janice Horn

The dates for the Birdathon this year are set for Sat., May 9 to Sun., May 17. Please consider participating -- either by spending a day birding (any 24 hour period in that range of days) or by pledging for someone who will be out seeking as many species as he/she can find.

This event is our most profitable fundraiser of the year and the more who take part the greater the success. You can do it by yourself, but the enjoyment is much greater if parties of 2 or more go out together.

If you have any questions or just want more information contact me at 814-226-7367 or jhhorn35@yahoo.com.

Winter Bird Seed Sale

~Janice Horn

This year we had an earlier than usual Winter Bird Seed Sale and the response was positive. We will plan to do that again in 2016. Twenty-one people participated, seven of whom are non-members. The winter sale, for a variety of reasons, is smaller than the fall one. During the fall sale twenty-four people purchased, with ten of those being non-members. We are thankful for the support of non-members and hope that our programs and field trips will interest them also.

Seneca Rocks is grateful to J & J Feeds and Needs for their cooperation in providing the opportunity for us to purchase food for our feathered friends (to say nothing of the squirrels) twice a year.

Thank you to everyone who takes part in this. You helped the Chapter make a profit of \$449.10 from the two events. If you know of others who might be interested please let me know.

PAMC

The annual PA Migration Count is May 9. This is a snapshot of species present on this day during Spring migration. Tallies are done by county. Carole Winslow is the compiler for Clarion, Gary Edwards for Venango, and Flo McGuire for Forest. It is a great day to go birding and report all of your sightings to your county compiler.

SRAS Annual Picnic

~ Deb Freed

SRAS will kick off the 2015-16 program year with the annual picnic at Cook Forest on Wednesday, August 12. SRAS will provide a meat dish and beverages. Everyone is asked to bring a dish to pass and their own place setting. The picnic site at Shelter 1 along Toms Run provides electricity. Come early to walk and bird. Dinner will be at 5:30 p.m. Friends and family are welcome!



Like us on Facebook!
<https://www.facebook.com/SenecaRocksAudubon>

Bird Day to International Migratory Bird Day

~ Gary Edwards

We now have International Migratory Bird Day, but did you know there's a local historical connection to Bird Day?

In 1894, Charles A. Babcock, Superintendent of Oil City schools, introduced "Bird Day," into the schools. The first event was celebrated on May 4th, with a portion of all class periods focusing on birds. Students participated by writing compositions, discussing birds in literature, giving presentations, and going on field trips.

Oil City's success prompted cities and states across the country to jump on the band wagon. President Grover Cleveland's Secretary of Agriculture, J. Sterling Morton, the man who had founded Arbor Day some two decades earlier, responded to the concept with enthusiasm. By 1901, at least seven states had laws designating Bird Day (Connecticut, Iowa, Nebraska, New Jersey, Oregon, Wisconsin, and Washington), and Babcock had written *Bird Day: How To Prepare for It*, a combination event-manual and mini-field-guide to some common Eastern birds.

An example of local Bird Day manifestations took place in Carrick, (now part of Pittsburgh). In 1909, businessman and conservationist, John M. Phillips, who helped found the Game Commission, launched Bird Day in Carrick by distributing several hundred bird-boxes along with sweet cherry and Russian mulberry trees through the school system. Bird Day of 1912 may have been the most successful. That day, 2,000 flag-waving school children and adults participated. The day culminated with a speech by Governor, John Kinley Tener.

In a final coup, Phillips induced the city of Pittsburgh to create the office of City Ornithologist, at a salary of \$1,200 per year. The duties of the officer were to protect all birds in the city from molestation (especially during nesting season), to erect bird-boxes, to provide food for wild birds, and to report annually on the status of birdlife. This was all an outgrowth of celebrating Bird Day.

Although the tradition faded over the years, the roots to some of our current celebrations began in Oil City.

Kingdom Under Glass Book Review

~Pat Conway



I picked up a non-fiction book at the library about a month ago, because it had a picture of a gorilla in the jungle on the cover, which intrigued me. I enjoy reading books about Africa.

"Kingdom Under Glass: A Tale of Obsession, Adventure, and One Man's Quest to Preserve the World's Great Animals," by Jay Kirk,

chronicles the life and career of taxidermist, sculptor, biologist, conservationist, inventor, and nature photographer, Carl Akeley. Akeley became world-renowned for the lifelike quality of his stuffed subjects and his inventions in the field of taxidermy. He led several hunting expeditions into Africa, hunting with Theodore Roosevelt and, early in his career, he preserved the world famous elephant, Jumbo, for P.T. Barnum.

This book was well researched and packed full of natural historical events occurring around the turn of the 20th century, including details of the deplorable slaughter of millions of birds for the decoration of women's hats, which was the fashion of the day.

Akeley suffered many injuries during his career. He was attacked by a leopard, trampled by a bull elephant and died in Africa from fever. He was buried in Africa a few miles from where he encountered his first gorilla.

Towards the end of his life, Akeley was the main person behind the chartering of the Virunga National Park in Africa. He realized that, in the future, people would only see these animals under glass, unless he did something to preserve them in their natural habitat.

Akeley's exhibits can be seen at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City and the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, Illinois.



Gambel's Quail photo courtesy of Peter LaTourrette, used with permission.

The Name Game

~ Gary Edwards

Philadelphia native William Gambel was born in 1823. At age 15, he accompanied Thomas Nuttall on an eleven-month trip to the southern states where he learned botanical collecting, ornithology, and mineralogy from one of the best naturalists of the day. In 1840, Nuttall used some of Gambel's observations of the Northern Flicker, Black-and-white Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, and Northern Waterthrush when he updated and finished his "Manual of the Ornithology of the United States and of Canada." In return, Nuttall named a new sparrow species *Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelii*. The bird is now recognized as a race of the White-crowned sparrow.

In 1841, Gambel headed west to collect plants for Nuttall. After some harrowing experiences with Indians, the wagon train arrived in Santa Fe, New Mexico. A few months later he headed for California and became the first naturalist ever to collect in Utah. Gambel spent a couple of years exploring and collecting in California, Mexico, South America, and Hawaii. He sent a paper to Nuttall describing Nuttall's Woodpecker, the Mountain Chickadee, and Gambel's Quail. His work made him the leading authority on the birds of southern California.

He also was an accomplished botanist and discovered the Gambel Oak on the banks of the upper Rio Grande.

In 1848, back in Philadelphia, he married. After graduating from medical school, he decided to ship his books and instruments to San Francisco and make his way there overland. In April 1849, he began his journey. His bride was left behind until he could afford to send for her. Weather forced the party to abandon their wagons in the Sierra Mountains and only a handful, including Gambel, survived to reach the Sacramento Valley. He contracted typhoid fever while treating some sick miners, and on December 13, 1849, died at the age of 26.

(Source: "Audubon to Xanthus" by Barbara and Richard Mearns)



10 Plants for a Bird-Friendly Yard

From Audubon.org

Choose native plants like these to beautify your real estate and provide food for birds.

Looking to spruce up your yard this spring? Try growing more native plants – plants that naturally occur in the area where you live. Gardening with native plants has many benefits: They're beautiful, they're already adapted to your precipitation and soil conditions, and they don't need artificial fertilizers or pesticides. Of course the biggest benefit might be that native plants are great for birds and other wildlife.

Native plants provide nectar for hummingbirds, butterflies, and bees. They provide nourishing seeds and irresistible fruits for your feathered neighbors, and they offer places to nest and shelter from harm. They're also a critical part of the food chain—insects evolved to feed on native plants, and by and large, backyard birds raise their young on insects, explains [Douglas Tallamy, the author of Bringing Nature Home](#). Take the Carolina Chickadee: A single clutch of four to six chicks will gobble up more than [9,000 caterpillars](#) in the 16 days between when they hatch

and when they leave the nest. So thriving insects mean thriving birds.

The key is to pick the right plants for your area. Here are 10 great plants to get you thinking about the possibilities—but remember, there are thousands of native plants out there.

Native Flowering Plants:

Purple Coneflowers (*Echinacea* spp.)

Coneflowers are a tried-and-true garden staple, and wildlife are drawn to them, too.

These beautiful blooms attract butterflies and other pollinators during the summer and provide seeds for goldfinches and other birds in the fall.

Sunflowers (*Helianthus* spp.)

Sunflowers may signify loyalty and longevity for people, but they mean food for many birds.

Birds often use the sunflower seeds to fuel their long migrations.

Milkweed (*Asclepias* spp.)

Milkweed is best known for hosting monarch butterfly caterpillars, but they attract loads of insects that are great for birds, too. Bonus: the flowers are gorgeous.

Birds that love them: Some birds, like the [American Goldfinch](#), use the fiber from the milkweed to spin nests for its chicks. Goldfinches, and other birds, also use the downy part of the seed to line their nests.

Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)

The cardinal flower's bright red petals resemble the flowing robes worn by Roman Catholic cardinals, after which it was named.

While few insects can navigate the long tubular flowers, hummingbirds feast on the cardinal flower's nectar with their elongated beaks.

Native Vines:

Trumpet Honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*)

One of the top most well-behaved vines to plant in your garden, the multitudes of red tubular flowers are magnets for hummingbirds.

This vine's nectar attracts hummingbirds while many birds like Purple Finches and Hermit Thrushes eat their fruit. During migration, Baltimore Orioles get to the nectar by eating the flowers.

The sweetly scented Japanese honeysuckle is actually an exotic invasive—but if you swap it with native trumpet honeysuckle, you'll attract plenty of birds.

Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*)

The Virginia creeper, also known as woodvine, may be best known for its similarity to poison ivy, but its leaves are harmless to your skin. While people may intentionally avoid it, many birds rely on its fruit during the winter.

It's a key food source for fruit-eating birds, such as mockingbirds, nuthatches, woodpeckers and blue jays.

Native Shrubs:

Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*)

Showy flowers and fruit make buttonbush a popular choice in native gardens and along pond shores.

In addition to beautifying a pond, they also provide seeds for ducks and other waterfowl. Their magnificent flowers also attract butterflies—and other pollinators.

Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*)

Elderberry is a versatile plant that has been used to make dye and medicine by people across the United States, as well as being a showy shrub for the landscape.

Its bright dark blue fruits (which we use for jam) provide food for many birds within its range, including the Brown Thrasher and Red-eyed Vireo, and dozens of other birds.

Native Trees:

Oak (*Quercus* spp.)

From southern live oaks to California black oaks, these large beautiful trees are a favorite for many people across the country—not to mention the great summer shade they provide. These trees are also an integral part of the food chain, so planting just one really helps your yard's diversity.

Similarly, many species of birds use the cavities and crooks of these trees for nesting and shelter. Birds are also drawn to the abundance of insects and acorns that are found on oaks—to learn more, check out [Doug Tallamy's work](#).

Dogwoods (*Cornus* spp.)

Nothing says spring quite like a dogwood full of newly-bloomed flowers.

Cardinals, titmice, and bluebirds all dine on the fleshy fruit of dogwood trees.

By incorporating native plants into your landscape, you're creating a sanctuary that benefits wildlife.

The 10 plants listed are a great starting point—they're easy to grow, they're great for birds, and most can be found at nurseries.

Editor's Note: Good resources for species native to our area are the Pennsylvania Native Plant Society, at www.panativeplantsociety.org and the book, "Native Plants of the Northeast" by Donald J. Leopold, available at the Clarion Free Library.

Cook Forest State Park Living History Weekend

Memorial Day Weekend, May 22-24

~ Dale Luthringer

Please join us for a fun filled weekend of living history as we journey through various historical eras: Medieval, French & Indian War, Industrial Revolution, Civil War, WWI, and WWII. Join living historian and master story-teller, Paul Stillman from *Historically Speaking!*, and historical interpreter, Dave Clark, as they take us through these noteworthy periods in history through first person character portrayals, and hands-on demonstrations.

Friday, May 22 from 8:00pm-9:00pm

Paul Stillman as 'Benjamin Franklin' One of the founding fathers of our country. Science, glass, music, and philosophy are only parts of Ben's life. Please bring your chairs & blankets and meet at the Ridge Camp Park Amphitheater.

Saturday, May 23 from 10:00am-12:00pm

Paul Stillman as a 'Seneca Indian' A Native American visits us from the past on his trip from New York as he travels south along the historic Olean Trail. Please meet at Seneca Point where he will be stopping to prepare corn for his trip.

Saturday, May 23 from 1:00pm-2:30pm

Dale Luthringer as a '1750s French Marine' We are looking for a few good men to learn how to march and fight for King Louis. Two opposable teeth required. Vive le Roi!!! Please meet at the River Cabin playground along River Rd. If rain, program will be held at the Log Cabin Inn Environmental Learning Classroom.

Saturday, May 23 from 3:00pm-4:30pm

Paul Stillman and Dave Clark as 'The North Meets South' Come see the Civil War through a New York regimental line soldier and a Rebel of the 7th South Carolina Army of Northern Virginia. Please meet at the River Cabin playground along River Rd. If rain, program will be held at the Log Cabin Inn Environmental Learning Classroom.

Saturday, May 23 from 8:00pm-9:00pm

Paul Stillman as 'Theodore Roosevelt' Our 26th President and former Governor of New York. Learn about his fascinating life. Please bring your chairs & blankets and meet at the Ridge Camp Park Amphitheater.

Sunday, May 24 from 1:00-2:00pm

Dave Clark as a 'World War I Doughboy of the 27th Division' See and hear what life was like over in the trenches. Please meet at the Log Cabin Inn Environmental Learning Classroom.

Sunday, May 24 from 2:30pm-4:00pm

Paul Stillman as a 'Colonial Craftsman' Learn how things were made during the early part of the 18th century during a quill and bamboo pen fabrication workshop. Please meet at the Log Cabin Inn Environmental Learning Classroom.

Sunday, May 24 from 4:30-5:30pm

Dave Clark as a 'World War II Marine of the 1st Division' Be a part of the 'Island Hopping' campaign in the Pacific Theater as you prepare for the rigors of Pelieu. Please meet at the Log Cabin Inn Environmental Learning Classroom.

Sunday, May 24 from 8:00pm-9:00pm

Paul Stillman as 'Ethyehode of Pyggewhystle' A medieval craftsmen from 13th century England - a free man and artificer. Please bring your chairs and blankets and meet at the Ridge Camp Park Amphitheater.

PSO Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology will be held May 29 thru May 31 at the Days Hotel in West Chester, PA. Field trips include Tinicum NWR, Great Marsh, Longwood Gardens, and many others. There will be vendors and a silent auction of bird-related items. For more information or to register, see www.pabirds.org.

Upcoming Dates & Events

March 28 - Outing to Conneaut Marsh

April 8 Program - Steve Dowlan, "A Birder's Journey from Clarion County"

May 13 Program - Gary Edwards & Ron Montgomery, Warbler Identification

May 16 & 17 - Foxburg Nature Fest

May 23 - Oil Creek State Park Warbler Walk



SRAS Leadership Team

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Ron Montgomery	764-6088
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Spring makes its own statement, so loud and clear that the gardener seems to be only one of the instruments, not the composer.

~Geoffrey B. Charlesworth

Seneca Rocks Audubon Society
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