



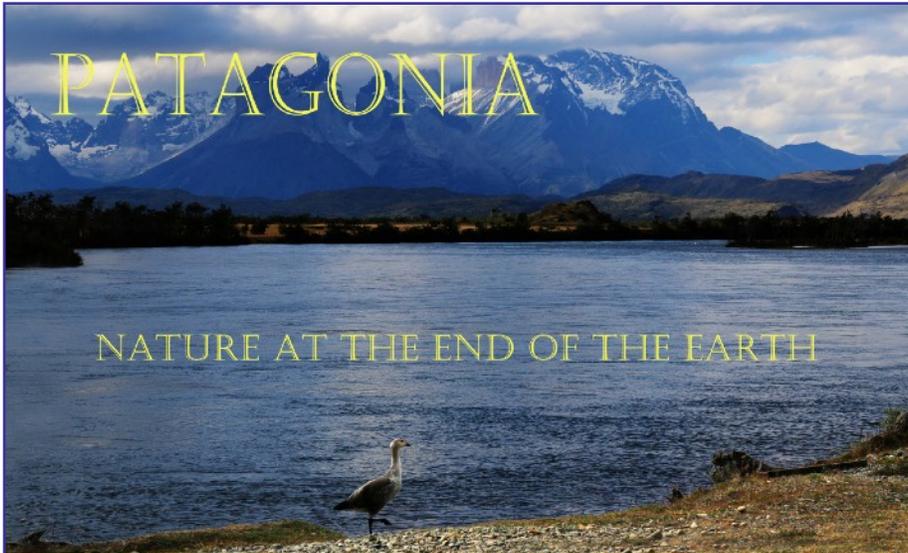
THE DRUMMER



www.senecarocksaudubon.org

November/December 2017

Volume 34, No.2



Patagonia: Nature at the End of the Earth

Jeffrey Hall
November 8 Program

“The word ‘Patagonia’...lodged itself in the Western imagination as a metaphor for The Ultimate, the point beyond which one could not go.” (Bruce Chatwin, *Patagonia Revisited*.) The Patagonia region of southern Chile and Argentina has long been a lure for those who seek adventure or solitude or natural wonders. Vast plains, snow-capped mountains, and iceberg-laden glacial lakes are the setting for an almost startling variety of

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

wildlife: Guanacos (the wild ancestors of llamas), flamingos, rheas, parakeets...The Straits of Magellan and Tierra del Fuego host penguins, albatrosses, petrels, and more. This presentation will survey many of the highlights of “the uttermost part of the earth.”

Jeffrey Hall is very active in our chapter as well as serving as president of the Bartramian Audubon Society. He is co-coordinator for the SRAS Facebook page. He has given over 100 programs for birding, nature, and photography groups. A retired biology instructor, he lives in Franklin.

Members' Night & Christmas Bird Count

December 13 Program

In December we focus on sharing our own photos, experiences and ideas. Did you read a nature book you would like to tell us about? Do you have some bird photos or travel photos to share? An experience to relate?

This is always a fun night with the spotlight on our own members.

We will also be finalizing plans for our Christmas Bird Count. Gary Edwards is overseeing the Count, and Deb Freed is coordinating the Feeder



Watchers. Our 31st CBC will be held on Sunday, December 17.

To see a map of the count circle, go to our website at <http://www.senecarocksaudubon.org/Resources/CBC%20map.pdf>. The CBC information is under "Go Birding, Bird Counts".



Common Nighthawk by Meg Kolodick

Oil City Common Nighthawk Count

~Gary Edwards

It was a banner year at the Oil City Marina Common Nighthawk Fall Migration Count. Our final total, 1342, was 96 birds higher than our previous high in 2009 and more than double our last 12 year average of 658. The weather cooperated and there were no rainouts during the watch period (Aug 14 to Sep 14). More than 50 birds were counted on nine separate evenings with a high of 390 on August 30.

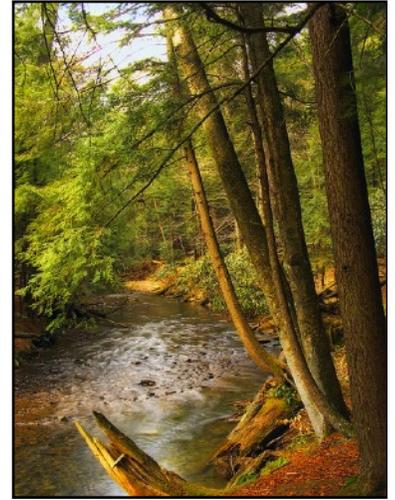
This year certainly was more exciting than 2015 and 2016 when we had our lowest totals of 186 and 306. The best non-nighthawk had to be a merlin seen on five separate evenings. SRAS members who assisted were Mal Hays, Meg and Nick Kolodick, Flo and Jim McGuire, Larry Towes, and Jim Wilson. An added plus this year was the start of a Clarion County count site at the Mill Creek-Clarion River confluence by Mal Hays and Larry Towes. They tallied 567 nighthawks in 22 evenings and that success has them anxious to count the entire month next year.

Visit us on Facebook!

<https://www.facebook.com/SenecaRocksAudubon>

Cook Forest State Park

A local treasure, the 8,500-acre Cook Forest State Park is famous for its stands of old growth Eastern White Pine and Eastern Hemlock, many dating from 1644. Cook Forest was designated as a Natural National Landmark in 1967, becoming the third such landmark in Pennsylvania.



Two long-distance trails, the North Country National Scenic Trail and the Baker Trail pass through Cook Forest State Park, following the same 12-mile stretch through the Forest Cathedral, passing Seneca Point, and meandering by the Clarion River.

The 140-mile Baker Trail (blazed yellow) runs from Freeport, PA, through the Allegheny National Forest.

The North Country Trail (blazed blue) is America's longest national scenic trail at 4,600 miles, running from New York to North Dakota.

People from all over the world travel to Cook Forest not only to hike, but to experience breathtaking nature scenery, catch glimpses of the wildlife, hunt and fish, canoe down the river, cross-country ski, and spend time with friends and family.

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 –

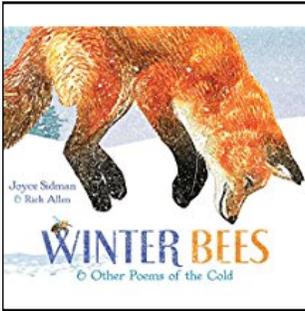
www.senecarocksaudubon.org.

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.

Books for Local Libraries

~Paulette Colantonio



Seneca Rocks Audubon and the Clarion County Garden Club have purchased books for 12 elementary and public libraries this year. Selections included both nonfiction and fiction titles and one

poetry book, *Winter Bees and Other Poems of the Cold*. Nonfiction offerings included *High Tide for Horseshoe Crabs* and *Birds, Nests, and Eggs*. The seven remaining fiction books are *Egg*, *Nora's Chicks*, *The Blue Songbird*, *Spit and Sticks*, *Owl Babies*, *Every Day Birds*, and *Among a Thousand Fireflies*.

Winter Bees and Other Poems of the Cold by Joyce Sidman is a collection of 12 poems beautifully crafted and supported by scientific sidebars designed to teach about life in the seemingly lifeless winter. The poetry covers animal and plant species along with one devoted to snowflakes. In *Winter Bees* we read "We are an ancient tribe, a hardy scum. Born with eyelash legs, and tinsel wings, we are nothing on our own. Together we are One." In the higher-level reading sidebars, the author expands the information with facts. "They are one of the few insects in the Northern Hemisphere that remain active in the freezing weather, and they do it in typical bee fashion by gathering, sharing, and communicating." In another poem, the author explores the joined existence of *Brother Raven*, *Sister Wolf*. It is offered in a choral reading style.

You are Squawker, Croaker, Alarm-on-the-wind.

You are Slinker, Shadow, Nose -to-the-ground...

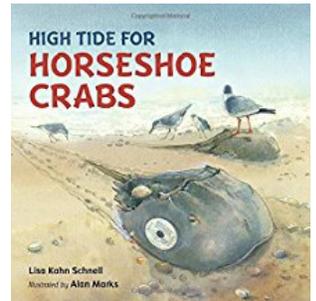
But don't stray too far, Keep watching our woods.

Don't slack off your work, Keep tracking our dinner.

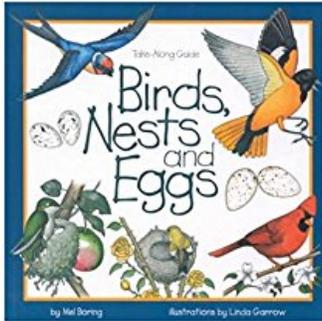
Then we read in the sidebar, "Wolves are drawn to the excited discovery cries of ravens,

and ravens follow wolf packs, hoping for a meal...Friend or foe, these two creatures share winter's challenge: finding enough food to survive the cold." If the poetry doesn't lure you in, Rick Allen's amazing illustrations will. They are an intricate combination of hand colored linoleum blocks, scanned and layered to cast an ethereal effect. This book could be used as a read-aloud for younger students or read independently by older elementary children. A glossary is presented defining more difficult vocabulary.

The first nonfiction title, *High Tide for Horseshoe Crabs*, describes the annual arrival of millions of horseshoe crabs in Delaware Bay. You are invited to attend along with migrating shorebirds, competent scientists, and curious vacationers. Lisa Kahn Schnell's selection unfolds on watercolor and pencil double-page spreads with two-tiered text. Bold print headlines consisting of two words such as, "It's starting, They're arriving, They're flapping," tie the event together. Supporting information about the arthropods, (not crabs, but relatives of ancient trilobites), provide science about the spawning. Young readers unable to grasp the smaller higher-leveled text need only to read the headlines and look at the illustrations to absorb the action. Red knots, ruddy turnstones, and sanderlings are accurately rendered. Some scientists are tagging shells while others record valuable information from tags displayed on returning crabs. Observant scholars will notice Alan Marks repeated portrayal of a mother and daughter viewing the spectacular frenzy and imagine themselves on the beach, too. Extensive material about horseshoe crabs is given in the back of the book. The intricate food web woven around this creature is explored. How the crab is beneficial to humans, from fertilizer to their blue blood used in the medical arena is reported. Good stewardship practices are also included. This

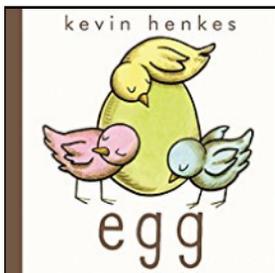


book is suitable for grades 3 through 7 and written on a 4.5 RL, but could be read aloud to younger naturalists.



Next, 15 common birds are introduced to primary students in Mel Boring's *Birds, Nests, and Eggs*. This guide for the very young offers a double-page spread featuring each species, complete with

colorful illustrations of the bird pair, the nest it creates, and the eggs within. Along with factual information, there is a "Something Interesting About" bubble on each species. One such bubble reported; "_____ can eat as much as 14 feet of earthworms in one day," and another, "_____ are such good bug-finders, that other birds like nuthatches and woodpeckers follow them to find bugs." Can you guess the birds? Three activities are presented for the children along with pages for scrapbooking and field notes.

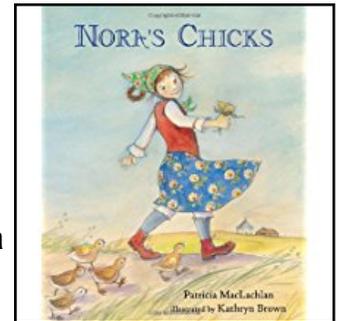


The first fiction book, *Egg*, is a minimalist selection by Kevin Henkes. Four pastel eggs of pink, yellow, blue, and green are introduced. Each egg is in one quadrant of a page framed in brown. Three of them

crack on the facing page. When the page is turned "Surprise" is found under three of the eggs, with a bird emerging from each, but not from the fourth light green egg. The little birds fly away, but return and wait for the last one to hatch. What a comic turn awaits readers when it finally does! Thus, begins a story about emotions preschoolers and readers of all ages experience, but often cannot put into words. This book is a wonderful read-aloud or read-alone for emergent readers. Henkes uses 15 words in the text. Many of the pages are wordless. However, the simple artwork conveys the plot and characters masterfully. *Egg* is a wonderful selection to encourage

children to delve into story telling themselves, especially offering an original ending to an open-ended book.

Second, Nora, her brother Milo, and their parents have emigrated from Russia to the American prairie in *Nora's Chicks*. The treeless farm in America is so different from the forested hills of Russia



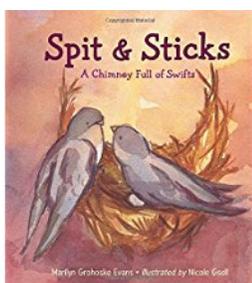
dressed in so many colors. Nora is unhappy and lonely. She longs for a friend. A stray dog the children name Willy after a beloved uncle, adopts Milo as a friend. Papa sings Russian lullabies to his friends, the horses and cows. "I need something all my own," she tells her parents. The void in Nora's heart is filled unexpectedly when Father brings 10 chicks and 2 goslings to the farm "for eating." "They are too beautiful to eat," she announces to her Father, and promptly names them all. The little birds accompany her everywhere, even to Sunday church services! Later that day, Nora discovers a chick is missing. How will the story end? This sweet story of new beginnings is written by Newbery medalist Patricia MacLachlan of *Sarah, Plain and Tall* fame. Kathryn Brown's drawings with watercolor washes support the text. A Junior Library Guild selection, it is a great read-aloud selection for ages 3-10. The independent RL is 2.7.



The Blue Songbird by Vern Kousky is the third fiction title. Using muted watercolor illustrations and lyrical text, Kousky relates a tale of discovery for readers of all ages. The little blue bird, portrayed with a simple dab of paint, awakens each morning

and tries to sing a song like her three yellow sisters' "lovely songs." Sadly, she experiences no success. Her wise mother advises her to fly

in search of her own “special song.” On this journey, she seeks the wisdom of other birds and asks, “Have you heard of a very special thing—a song that only I can sing?” She encounters many winged-friends, but none can offer help. Finally, on a bitter winter day, a very scary black crow sends her to an island where she will find her own melody. Surprisingly, the little creature discovers her unique voice where the story began. Her beautiful mature voice reports of her journey at home, surrounded by her mother and sisters. Kousky’s watercolor illustrations, very oriental in style, capture the personalities of all the characters and the various settings in the story. Although the book is recommended for K-3, the higher reading level, 4.5, makes it appropriate for any voyager rediscovery the joy of familiar people and places.

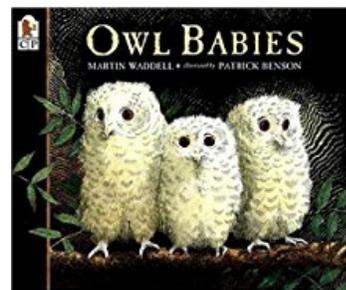


Next, *Spit and Sticks: A Chimney Full of Swifts* by Marilyn Grohoske Evans begins with the arrival of a “stub-tailed cigar-shaped bird” on a farm in Texas, returning from its other home in South America. A factual tale unfolds about a

pair of swifts constructing a stick nest held together with ‘sticky spit’ secured on the inside of an open chimney. Three white oval eggs are laid and then hatch. The text and illustrations convey how the young swifts grow and finally fledge. The watercolor illustrations rendered by Nicole Gsell support the plot about the swifts, but also portray an independent wordless story about the humans in the same house and how they prepare for the birth of a new child! The stories progress woven seamlessly together and will provide much conversation. The story ends with the fall migration of the swifts and an illustration of the humans cleaning the chimney. “And once again the chimney is silent... until next year.” Endnotes discuss the migration of these birds and various specie behaviors. Young naturalists are encouraged to get involved in helping this bird declining in number by reading, constructing towers, and urging

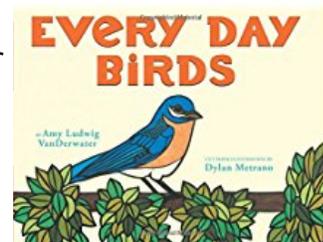
parents to keep the chimney top open and damper closed in the breeding season to provide a nesting site in their home. The book is written on a 2.7 reading level.

In the fifth fiction book, three fluffy owlets, Sarah, Percy, and Bill live with their mother in a hole in a tree deep in the forest. They wake up one night and discover Mother gone! Martin Waddell then spins a

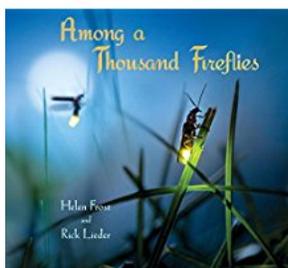


story utilizing simple sentences and precise words as the siblings wait throughout the long dark night for her return in *Owl Babies*. Each baby bird’s distinct personality is captured throughout the text and illustrations. Sarah the largest, is cerebral and logical about Mother’s absence. Percy, next in size, tries to be brave. The smallest and most in need of comforting is Bill, who always hoots the same sentence, “I want my mommy.” This wonderful selection for preschoolers and primary-aged children rings true for any child facing anxiety when separated from a parent. Adults reading with a child rediscover empathy for small children in these situations. Benson’s black ink and watercolor crosshatching complete the mood of the storyline and provide a springboard for discussion of nighttime and trust. Repeated text will have young listeners chiming in during Storytime. Be prepared for the last page reunion, it will melt your heart. This book, written at a 2.4 RL is enjoying its 25th anniversary this year.

Next, through simple poetry and bold full-color cut-paper illustrations, young readers are introduced to 20 species of common North American winged creatures in *Every Day Birds* by Amy Ludwig Vanderwater. “Hawk hunts every day for prey. Cardinal flashed fire.



Woodpecker taps hollow trees. Crow rests on a wire.” The simple sentences are supported by Dylan Metrano’s illustrations which capture accurate information about settings or bird behavior. For instance, the pigeon is depicted in front of a city skyline and nuthatch is perching on a tree trunk, traveling in a downward fashion. Interesting facts about each featured bird are presented in the back of this guide as well as a note from the author. Five websites and two additional bird guides are also included. The book is designed for very young naturalists and is written on a 2.9 RL.



Last, *Among a Thousand Fireflies* is a gorgeous informational book created through the collaboration of author Helen Frost and photographer Rick Lieder. Succinct prose tells of the

improbable meeting of two specific fireflies in a night filled with the light from thousands of these insects. “Among a thousand fireflies, he has found this one. With his light, he calls to her. She answers. She waits for him. He flies to her. At last, they meet.” Lieder’s breathtaking photography, awash with night blues, greens, and purples, supports the plot while creating a hushed hypnotic feeling, just right for observing the light show. Additional facts are offered in the back of the book about these beetles. It imparts information on how a specific firefly finds a specific mate using patterns of flashes. This is a creation for any age of naturalist. (You may view a book trailer for this gem at www.bugdreams.com).

Three Basic Ways to Identify Raptors - Baby Owls Napping - Attract Migrating Birds

Interested? These articles and more are available in the National Audubon Newsletter - read the latest issue here: <http://audubon.stagecoachdigital.com/web-view/3360>
You can also sign up to receive these newsletters in your email.

Clarion County Summer 2017 Report

~Carole Winslow

Locations: Curllsville (CV), Mt Airy (MA), Mt Zion/Piney Tract/SGL 330 (MZ), Redbank Valley Trail (RVT).

While there wasn’t as much specific breeding information obtained this year for **Northern Harriers**, they were observed in four of their traditional locations over the season, indicating at least attempted nesting again this year. At MZ, one was observed between 6/1-6/13 (KSJ, MS, MVT, CW). At MA, both male and female were observed between 6/1-7/9 (AIB, TH, EM, MVT). At the CV strips site, 2 birds were seen 6/1 through 6/26 (AB, MH, RH, AK, RR), and a single bird was again seen there 7/8 (KP). On Rankin Rd near CV, one adult was present 6/26 (AG, MH, RH). At a new nesting site along the Clarion River at the Canoe Ripple Bridge near Callensburg, a juvenile **Bald Eagle** was noted still at the nest, fully feathered and appearing about ready to fledge 6/4 (CW). This makes at least three currently active, successful nesting sites just in the southern part of the county.

Upland Sandpipers again returned to their traditional spot at MA, with a single bird observed along Morris Rd from 6/2-6/13 (AK, SS). With changing land practices at this site, including increased use of the land for crops instead of pasture or hay field, it will be more of a challenge in the future for this species to continue here. The only reported sighting for falcons was that of a **Merlin** reported at MZ 6/1 (DF, MVT). With scattered reports from around this area the past several years, it would be rewarding to locate an active nest at some point in the future for this expanding species.

One of the least reported vireos in the county is **White-eyed Vireo**, so a report from 7/15 at SGL 74 is welcome (RN). There is some excellent habitat at this little-visited location for the species. Also poorly

recorded is **Warbling Vireo**, this year noted continuing from spring at MA 6/13 (AK). One was also noted near Lawsonham on the RVT 6/2 (SS), and 2 along the same trail at New Bethlehem 6/7 (J&AK).

A previously unknown colony of **Purple Martins** was discovered at an Amish farm near Fryburg in northern *Clarion* 7/10 (FM). Twenty birds were seen that day, however the homeowner reported 40 known nests and likely over 60 young this season. At this same location, 4 birds were observed 7/15 (DG, GG).



The only thrush of note was that of **Hermit Thrush**, which continue to populate small pockets of remaining hemlock/pine habitat along sections of the Clarion River and its tributaries which remain untouched from the strip mining of past days. This remaining habitat provides a nesting area for this species more typically found north of I-80 and in more mountainous regions. This year they were found at MZ in an area rarely visited by birders. Three singing males remained active at this site from spring, noted on the river side of the main grassland 6/8, where hillside hemlocks meet reclaimed strip mine (CW). They were also found just outside the boundaries of MZ, along Mauthe Rd where it traverses hillside hemlock habitat on its way down to the Clarion River. Two were noted here 6/26 (AB, MH, RH) and one 7/8 (TH).

Worm-eating Warblers continue to be worthy of

mention in the warbler line-up, as they are so habitat-specific and less common west of the central mountains. At Sarah Furnace along the Allegheny River, one singing male was present 6/2 (SS). Along the RVT heading east from Lawsonham, 5 were found along a 3.5 mile stretch 7/11, with one bird seen carrying food to confirm breeding (CW). They continued along the trail late into the season, with a single bird still singing 7/20 near Redbank (CW), and again in this area 7/27 (KD, BG). Breeding **Mourning Warblers** are a rarity for the county, being near the southern edge of their range west of the mountains. A new location was found this year that might provide suitable habitat for a short time. At SGL 24 near Tylersburg, a single bird was located 6/16 in a regenerating select cut (MW). At this same location, a female was observed and a singing male heard 7/10 (CW), and a single bird still present there 7/15 (DG, GG). In contrast, **Kentucky Warblers** are on the northern edge of their range, and continue to be very sparsely reported despite some quality habitat along the southern border. The only sighting this season was a singing male found unusually late along the RVT near Redbank 7/20 (CW). While **Yellow-rumped Warblers** have expanded their range in recent years, reports during breeding season are still unusual, especially in the southern part of the county. There is suitable habitat in some old strip mine sites planted in pine and larch, and this is where two singing males were located at MZ 6/8, across from the main grassland site (CW). A female was also noted at this location 7/8 (TH). **Yellow-throated Warblers** are the last in the line up, and like Kentucky Warblers, are nearing the northern end of their range in the county. They are almost always found in riparian corridors and this year they continued from spring along the RVT near Lawsonham, with a singing male still there 6/2 (SS).

Both **Grasshopper** and **Henslow's Sparrow** had showings of typical numbers this year throughout their usual grassland habitat, primarily in southern *Clarion*. **Clay-colored Sparrow** is starting to become more difficult to find, likely due to the ephemeral nature of their preferred habitat of

shrubby, overgrown fields. As many of the reclaimed strip mine sites become increasingly grown up with woody plants, and have less open area, this species appears to be abandoning sites. At their most reliable location at CV strips, only a single bird was reported 6/13 (AK), and again 7/27 (KD, BG). At MZ, only a single bird was reported this season on 7/9 (EM), and at MA, a single singing male was heard and seen from 6/4-6/13 (TH, AK, SS). A new location for them starting last year is a grassland and pine area at SGL 74 near Strattanville, where a singing male continued from spring through 7/16 (MH, RN, MS, CW). **Vesper Sparrow** continues to be the grassland sparrow with the fewest sightings, and this year the only one noted was at MA 6/13 (AK). The biggest news was another incursion of **Dickcissels**, similar to the last ones in 2012 and 2013. This year, they were found in two locations. First at MA, with a singing male seen 6/11 (RR), and again 6/13 (AK). At a grassland area along Skyline Dr near CV, 2 birds were found 7/1 (AB) and 3 were seen there 7/5, including a female and two singing males (CW). Up to 3 individuals continued to be seen there through 7/11 (MH, TH, EM, KP, CW). At this same location one female and one juvenile bird were found 7/29, confirming breeding (TH).

Observers: Carole Winslow, 159 Moggey Rd, Sligo PA 16255, cjwinslow94@gmail.com, Anthony Bruno, Alan Buriak (AIB), Karyn Delaney, Debbu Fazekas, Barbara Griffith, Deborah Grove, Greg Grove, Mal Hays, Margaret Higbee, Roger Higbee, Todd Hooe, John and Avis Keener, Andy Keister, Evan Mann, Mark Moore, Flo McGuire, Richard Nugent, Kevin Parsons, Rich Rehrig, Steve Sanford, Michael Schall, Kate St. John, Marge Van Tassel, Mike Weible.



On the Christmas Bird Count this year, SRAS birders will use these magnetic signs on their cars. Watch for them in your area!

From Our Newsletter Archives

October 1984...

ELK TRIP A total of 21 Seneca Rocks members took advantage of the Elk State Forest trip during Friday and Saturday of Sept. 21-22. The weather was absolutely fantastic with super sunsets. Bull elk were bugling and nearly everyone saw elk... [including] some small groups grazing (like domestic cows, not browsing as seen in deer). Other critters seen included a gray fox, a black bear, and a flock of turkeys, and a number of barred owls were heard hootin'.

November 1984...

PA SURVEY FOR BIRDS On May 30, 1984, the Wild Resource Conservation Board appropriated funding for a Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas Survey. The program is being administered by the Pa. Game Commission and the Academy of Natural Science. 2,000 volunteers will participate in the five year survey.

December 1984...

NEXT MEETING Mr. Bernie Spozio of USDA's Soil Conservation Service, Clarion County Office, will discuss the present status of local wetlands and the proposed impoundment on Beaver Creek that would be utilized for fishing, hunting, with one part being developed solely as a waterfowl/wildlife refuge. Seneca Rocks member Walt Fye and the Knox Nature Club have played an instrumental part in dealing the project the early attention and support it deserves.

Upcoming Dates & Events

October 28 through November 4 - Bird Seed Pick-up

November 8 - Jeffrey Hall, Patagonia: Nature at the End of the Earth

December 13 - Members' Night and CBC Planning

Christmas Bird Count, Sunday, December 17

*When I would recreate myself, I seek the darkest wood,
the thickest and the most interminable, and to the
citizen, the most dismal swamp. I enter the swamp as a
sacred place—a sanctum sanctorum. There is the
strength, the marrow of Nature.*

~ Henry David Thoreau



Purple Finch

SRAS Leadership Team

Deb Freed	Media & Membership	226-4719
Paulette Colantonio	Nature Books	797-2031
Pat Conway	Facebook	752-2036
Gary Edwards	Outreach Programs/CBC	676-3011
Jeffrey Hall	Facebook	732-0258
Janice Horn	Treasurer/Birdseed Sale	226-7367
Mike Leahy	Beaver Creek	229-1648
Flo McGuire	Newsletter & Website	755-3672
Ron Montgomery	Outreach Programs	764-6088
Jim Wilson	Nest Boxes & Feeders	676-5455

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