



THE DRUMMER



www.senecarocksaudubon.org

November/December, 2009

Volume 26, No. 2

November 9 Program

The Christmas Bird Count presented by Ron Montgomery

The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is a nationally recognized "citizen science" event that has contributed valuable bird species data for over 100 years. Seneca Rocks member Ron Montgomery has been exploring the Christmas Bird Count website for some history and interesting facts. He will present his findings from both the national data and the data gathered within the Clarion County circle.

Analyzing data is a continuation of Ron's educational and professional background. He moved to Clarion County after he retired from FMC Corporation's Research Center in Princeton, NJ, where he was Director of Research and Development. His primary area of expertise was in discovery, process research, and environmental chemistry dealing with insecticides and herbicides. His academic background includes a PhD from Duke University in Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry.

Since moving to Clarion Ron has held many leadership positions with Seneca Rocks, including

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SRAS meetings are held on the second
Monday of each month
Room 136, Science Technology Center
Social – 6:30 p.m. Program – 7:00 p.m.

December 14 Program

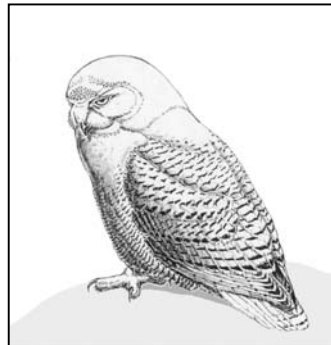
Members' Night, Silent Auction & Cookie Exchange

December festivities for SRAS will once again feature short presentations from our members. Members are asked to share artwork, photos, nature objects, birding tips for feeding stations, tips to prevent window strikes, trip pictures and interesting local sightings. Members may bring several of their favorite photographs in digital format to share.

We will also have a silent auction, since last year's auction was such a success. Your donated item should have a minimum bid. Bid sheets will be provided. New and gently used items may include: books, field guides, feeders, artwork, photographs, bird craft, birding accessories, jewelry, and copies of birding magazines. Proceeds will be part of the chapter's general income.

Our partnership with Clarion University's Chapter of The Wildlife Society through the Biology Department continues throughout the year. Final

(continued on page 2)



We had our first Snowy Owl
on the Clarion CBC in 2005.
Drawing - Steven D'Amato.

Ron Montgomery, CBC, continued

program and field trip chairmanships. He has a passion for learning and generously provides programs to youth and adult groups on bird topics as well as genealogy and chemistry.

Ron is a Pennsylvania native from Armstrong County. He and his wife Judy have four grown children and ten grandchildren.

The Christmas Bird Count has been a popular event with Seneca Rocks members and friends, and this analysis should prove interesting. Ron will also have some improved tally sheets to get us ready for the 2009 count on December 19. Be sure to join us!

~Deb Freed

DRUMMER'S LOG SIGN-UP



If you would like to join a group of potential nature outing companions, then add your name to the Drummer's Log. These folks

would like to be notified of trips to birding destinations or other places of interest to nature lovers.

To date 10 members have signed-up: Margaret Buckwalter, Ron Montgomery, Deb Freed, Flo McGuire, Janice Horn, Gil Twiest, Gary Edwards, Fran Williams, Jack Williams and Ray McGunigle. Copies of the list will be made available with contact information.

~ Deb Freed

I believe that at least in the present phase of our civilization we have a profound, a fundamental need for areas of wilderness - a need that is not only recreational and spiritual but also educational and scientific, and withal essential to a true understanding of ourselves, our culture, own natures, and our place in all nature.

~ Howard Zahniser

Members' Night, continued

exams for students begin on Dec. 14. We want to extend our holiday spirit to the students with some cookies. Members who wish to participate are asked to bring 4 packets of 6 cookies each. Two packets will be for students to take to their favorite study nook, one packet to exchange with a member (take home a new cookie!) and one packet to open for our meeting refreshments.

~Deb Freed

Thank you, Seneca Rocks Audubon

"On behalf of Immaculate Conception School, I would like to thank you for your donation to our school's library. Your contribution will help us to maintain academic excellence at Immaculate Conception School."

Donna Gaydash
Principal 8-10-2009

"The West Forest Library wishes to express a thank you for your generosity. Thank you so much for your donation of bird books."

Miss Jane Boyles
Librarian 9-9-2009

"Thank you so much for the donation of books for our library. Our students are certain to enjoy these. Thank you."

Mr. Edward Dombroski
Principal 8-12-2009

The *Drummer* is the bi-monthly 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 now published 4 times per year – September, November, February and April.

The *Drummer* is available on our website in color 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.

110th Christmas Bird Count December 19



Pre-dawn and after dark "owling" counts are also included.

The Christmas Bird Count involves Audubon members and community members who count birds and tally the total for each species. Counts are conducted by individuals and teams who either travel a territory or count birds at a feeder any time from sun-up to sun-down on Saturday December 19. Pre-

The territory is a prescribed circle that is roughly centered at Piney Dam and extends in a 7 mile radius. There are several veteran teams that travel parts of the "circle" and many veteran "feeder watchers" who count at home. We invite new counters to join in the fun.

If you are interested in joining a team or covering a part of the territory contact Deb Freed at 226-4719 or dfreed208@comcast.net. If you want to participate as a feeder watcher contact Ruth Schurr at 764-3239 or ruthschurr@windstream.net. The map of the territory is available on-line at www.senecarocksaudubon.org. Click on "Bird Counts", then "Christmas Bird Count". Team assignments will be made at the December 14 program. Tally sheets will be available on-line and at the program. Further information about the Christmas Bird Count is available on-line at www.audubon.org/bird under Citizen Science.

At the conclusion of the day's count at 5:30 p.m., everyone is invited to BJ's Eatery at Knox Exit 53 on I-80 where dinner may be ordered. Individuals and teams will share highlights of their counts and a total species count will be tallied. This annual gathering is always fun.

~Deb Freed

Marcellus Shale Program

Natural gas extraction from Marcellus shale that lays under two-thirds of our state has wide-ranging implications for all of us. How important is the drilling of natural gas to our economic and national well being? What can be done to protect land, water, and air quality? What regulation and legislation are needed to balance revenue needs with environmental costs and property rights?

What happens with the Marcellus shale resources will have important repercussions for the whole community. Plan to join the League of Women Voters on November 17 at 7 p.m. in the Main St. Center in Clarion for a presentation on these issues.

Please invite your friends and family to join you in attending.

~ Janice Horn

Beautiful Audubon 2010 Calendars For Sale to benefit SRAS

Deb Freed will be taking calendar orders at the November program. Six different calendars are available. Audubon Engagement Calendar, Nature, Wildflowers, Songbirds and Green World are all \$10. The new John James Audubon calendar featuring prints from his *Birds of America* will be \$12. Place your order on the sign-up sheet that has a full description of each calendar. Calendars will be available at the December 14 program.

The Great Photo that Isn't

While driving through southern Arkansas in October during a lovely morning I saw a large number of turkey vultures getting ready for the day. They covered most of a small tree and another perch. A couple were drying their wings which needed it; not just after the night but after a day of rain that had brought flooding to the area. I thought, "We should turn around and take a picture." But I dithered and there went the great photo that isn't.

~ Janice Horn



Audubon at Home - Birdscaping

~ article and photos by Carole Winslow

As bird and nature lovers and Audubon members, hopefully we all know that good habitat and seeing the birds and the wildlife we enjoy go hand in hand. As Stephen Kress, Audubon biologist states - "Improving the quality of land for wildlife is the single most constructive step we can take to assist wild bird populations." This may often seem like something too big for us to play a part in, but that is not the case. Even in small ways, changes to property we own or care for can add up to positive effects that, taken cumulatively, do make a difference to the birds around us. To encourage people to think about their yards and communities this way the Audubon at Home Bird Habitat Recognition Program offers us a way to make a commitment to certain changes, suggestions on ways to do this, information on birdscaping both small and large properties, and even a property "assessment" based on what you report, along with a star rating and individualized suggestions. A small sign to post on the property even gives you a chance to share the fact that your area is recognized and that you have made an agreement to keep it a safe haven for birds and wildlife. As part of the program, when registering you are asked to agree to a "Healthy Yard Pledge", which includes planting native species, both natural and added food and cover, nesting sites, managing water run-off, and minimizing or eliminating use of pesticides.

I was pleased to register our 68 acre farm in southern Clarion County with this program and get some feedback from Steven Saffier, the coordinator of the program at Audubon Pennsylvania. Through the program there is access to many materials on plants, trees and shrubs, teaching both native and invasive species. This has spurred me to learn much more about what is present here and because of that I've learned we have many great bird plantings I had not been aware of before, such as silky, gray and flowering dogwood, red mulberry, black gum, Virginia creeper and American bittersweet. Some of the property also includes reclaimed strip mine grasslands which we try to manage for grassland species such as Henslow's and grasshopper sparrows. We provide feeders in three seasons, 15 bluebird and swallow nestboxes and one kestrel box that housed a successful kestrel pair this year with 4 young.



We have what I call sometimes a "messy" approach to property management which is to leave fallen and standing dead trees for food and nest sites, overgrown borders and edges, and mowing of fields only once a year or on rotation with only late season haying done. Some of the best birding here is in the tangled and overgrown areas along the edges! In short, though I could add more about what we do here, everyone has some area, whether large or small where some changes can be made. Even \$3 planter saucers can make great inexpensive bird baths as I have found. Poison ivy growing up a tree can either seem a nuisance to get rid of, or can be let go and watch the fall birds enjoy the berries! If you've

already made changes and practice birdscaping, then register your place and get some recognition for it, it just might encourage some others around you to do the same.

On a last note, consider starting to record and track birds on your property using the online site eBird through Cornell Lab of Ornithology. It's easy to use and you can track the birds year to year, hopefully allowing you to see the positive changes. This type of project would also make a great idea for high school students to use for school projects as well. Links for both Audubon and eBird are:

<http://pa.audubon.org>

<http://ebird.org/content/pa>

Howard Zahniser: Author of the Wilderness Act

~ information from www.wilderness.net



Howard Zahniser was born on February 25, 1906, in Franklin, Pennsylvania. The son of a Free Methodist minister, he grew up in the Allegheny River region of northwestern Pennsylvania. He spent his teenage years in

Tionesta, just west of what is now the Allegheny National Forest. It was here that he developed a life-long interest in nature and a love of literature. He attended Greenville College in Illinois where he received a degree in humanities.

Beginning in 1930, Zahniser was employed by the U.S. Department of Commerce and soon the USDA Bureau of Biological Survey (which would several years later become the core agency of the new USDI Fish & Wildlife Service). He worked for 12 years for the Fish & Wildlife Service in the information division where he honed his interests in nature, influenced by the likes of Ira Gabrielson and Edward Preble, as well as doing his own research, writing, and editing. He worked at writing press releases, speeches for agency directors, radio scripts for the National Farm and Home Hour (in which he sometimes appeared himself). In 1942, after the start of World War II, the Fish &

Wildlife Service was relocated to Chicago, but Zahniser found work in the USDA Bureau of Plant Industry, Soils, and Agricultural Engineering. He worked as the director of the Bureau's information and editorial division.

During this time as a federal employee, he contributed articles and essays to scholarly and scientific journals relating to the conservation/environmental movement. Zahniser's ideas about ecosystems and wilderness were influenced heavily by Harold Anderson, Harvey Broome, Bernard Frank, Aldo Leopold, Benton MacKaye, Bob Marshall, Ernest Oberholtzer, Olaus Johan Murie and Robert Sterling Yard, who were driving forces behind the fledgling wilderness movement and the formation of The Wilderness Society (founded in 1936). In 1945, Murie left the National Park Service to become director of The Wilderness Society in Moose, Wyoming, and at approximately the same time, Zahniser left the federal government and became the executive secretary of the organization in Washington, D.C. Murie and Zahniser led the organization and built a broad basis for support. Both were pivotal in the passage of the Wilderness Act of 1964.

In the 1910s and 1920s, there were several proponents of wilderness. Three men are considered pivotal in these early years and all were Forest Service employees: Aldo Leopold, Arthur Carhart, and Bob Marshall. Their efforts were successful at the local level in creating administratively designated wilderness protection for several areas across the country beginning in 1924 with the designation of the Gila Wilderness on the Gila National Forest. At the national level, there were a series of policy decisions that made wilderness and primitive area designation relatively easy, but what was lacking was a common standard of management across the country for these areas. Also, since these wilderness and primitive areas were administratively designated, the next chief or regional forester could "undesignate" any of the areas with the stroke of a pen. This situation was considered to be unacceptable by Zahniser and others.

Zahniser became the primary leader in a movement to have Congress, rather than the federal agencies, designate wilderness areas. In 1946, proposed legislation for a Federal Wildlands Project articulating the vision of Benton MacKaye, then president of The Wilderness Society, was circulated, though it was never introduced into

Congress. The lack of support for this proposed legislation showed Zahniser that substantial national support would be needed to achieve wilderness legislation.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, he led conservationists of the era to successfully fight the Echo Park Dam. This was a Bureau of Reclamation proposal in 1949, to build a substantial hydroelectric project in Dinosaur National Monument as part of the Upper Colorado River Storage Project. The dam fight came to symbolize the nation's endangered parks and wildernesses. Zahniser served as a representative of conservation interests in negotiations with the government, and the issue was finally resolved in 1955 with no dam being built. With the support he had garnered from the conservation community during this fight, he went on to be an important leader in the campaign for federal wilderness legislation in the 1950s and early 1960s.

By 1949, Zahniser had a detailed idea for federal wilderness legislation in which Congress would establish a national wilderness system, prohibit incompatible uses, identify appropriate areas, list potential new areas, and authorize a commission to recommend changes to the program. It was not until after the Legislative Reference Bureau report on wilderness was published legitimizing concern for wilderness and the Echo Park Dam fight united the conservation community, however, that the first wilderness bill would be drafted.

In 1955, Zahniser began an effort to convince skeptics and Congress to support a bill to establish a national wilderness preservation system. Drafts of a bill were circulated the next year and introduced in Congress by Rep. John P. Saylor (R-PA). He sought to rally public opinion through writing in *The Living Wilderness* and other publications as well as organizing many talks to citizens groups across the country. By the late 1950s it seemed that the wilderness bill would eventually become law, but there were many legislative battles still to be fought.

Hubert H. Humphrey (D-MN) became a major supporter of the bill, but state water agencies, mining, timber, and agricultural interests were very much opposed. Also, the Forest Service and the National Park Service both initially opposed the bill, not wanting to give up administrative control. The wilderness bill, which was stalled for several years in Congress, finally came out of committee

with a compromise to allow mining in national forest wildernesses until 1984.

Howard Zahniser's son Ed recalled, at a national wilderness conference in 2000, that on Saturdays, it was his father's job to take the four children out of the house for "Zahnie's Rational Spousal Preservation System," and take them for hikes along the C&O Canal or to the National Mall museums and art galleries. He recounted that some of the Saturdays were devoted to Capitol Hill visits where the four children could be found distributing Wilderness Act pamphlets to remaining members of Congress. Ed said, "We four kids could talk wilderness first hand...Did our squeaky-voiced squadron of Saturday lobbyists turn a heart or two? Who knows?"

Ironically, Howard Zahniser died on May 5, 1964, two days after testifying at the final congressional hearing for the Wilderness Act, and just a few months before the bill became the law of the land. But his widow, Alice, was among those who stood at Lyndon Johnson's side when the wilderness law was passed on September 3, 1964. The act designated 9.1 million acres of wilderness in the new National Wilderness Preservation System, most of these coming from the national forests. Because of Zahniser's relentless efforts, he has often been called the "Father of the Wilderness Act". The United States was the first country in the world to define and designate wilderness areas through law.

Zahniser wrote the first draft of the Wilderness Act in 1956. An eloquent wordsmith, he chose the word "untrammled" to characterize wilderness in the Act. Others questioned this choice, yet he was adamant about its use as the right word to characterize wilderness.

"A wilderness...is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammled by man..." - The Wilderness Act.

Exhibit at RTPI --The current exhibit at the Roger Tory Peterson Institute in nearby Jamestown, NY is *Mapping the Birds of New York*. Large displays highlight maps and artwork from the new book, *The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State*. Is the distribution of the Purple Martin shrinking? Is the Cooper's Hawk becoming more urban? Hours are 10 am to 4 pm, more info at www.rtpi.org.



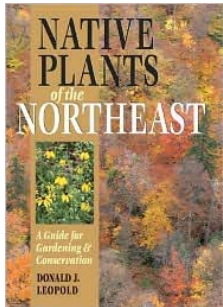
Allegheny Islands Wilderness Area – photo from website

Wilderness Areas

There are two designated Wilderness Areas in Pennsylvania, both near us in Northwestern PA.

Hickory Creek Wilderness Area, near Tidioute, was designated in 1984 and includes 8,663 acres. It is a densely forested area of northern hardwoods and hemlock with an understory of abundant flowers, ferns, shrubs, and mosses. Its elevation varies from 1273 feet to a plateau at 1900 feet, and includes a single designated trail, a loop of about 12 miles.

The Allegheny Islands Wilderness Area was also designated in 1984. It consists of 7 islands in the Allegheny River between Buckaloons Recreation Area and the town of Tionesta, a distance of about 56 miles. The total area of the islands is about 368 acres. Alluvial in origin, the islands were formed from deposits of sand, mud, and clay that the river carried down from the Allegheny Mountains. Old river-bottom trees – willow, sycamore, and silver maple – characterize these islands.



An excellent book for anyone interested in plants native to our area is *Native Plants of the Northeast* by Donald J. Leopold. The author includes species descriptions on ferns, grasses, wildflowers, vines, shrubs, and trees. His love of plants is evident

in the many color photos and descriptions. Also very useful for the home gardener are lists of plants for wet, dry, or shady conditions; plants to attract birds, hummingbirds, butterflies, and mammals.

Happenings at the National Aviary in Pittsburgh

Junior Veterinarians -Wednesdays, 10:30 am

The National Aviary has launched a new program to introduce little ones to the world of veterinary care. Geared for children ages 2-6, Junior Veterinarians gives kids the opportunity to learn about the many things vets do each day to keep animals healthy and well. Children will practice their animal doctor skills using toy stethoscopes, bandages and other toy medical equipment on plush birds that the Aviary provides, or children can choose to bring a plush animal from home for a medical exam. Junior Veterinarians is led by Aviary veterinary staff, and during the program one of the Aviary's own patients will be brought out for participants to meet.

Saturdays with Santa – December 5, 12, 19 – 11 am - 2 pm

Forget the mall photos - children visiting the National Aviary on weekends this December will have the opportunity for an unforgettable holiday photo with Santa himself and one of the Aviary's penguins. The day includes a take-away treat, crafts and admission to all daily events. Guests can snap their own photos of the children sharing their wishes with Santa, or pay an additional \$5 for a photo taken by Aviary staff. Cost is \$10 per child; adults pay regular \$10 admission.

Breakfast with Santa –December 6 & 13 – 8:30 am - 10:30 am

Enjoy breakfast with your favorite feathered friends and a visit with Santa. Santa's penguin helpers will be on hand to pose for pictures and help hand out a special take-away treat. \$15 per child.

Holiday Free-flight Bird Show – Dec 5, 6, 12, 13, 19, 20 –1:30 pm

The Aviary's birds will take wing in the glass-domed Atrium, giving seated guests plenty of close encounters an array of species. General admission: \$10 adults; \$9 seniors; \$8.50 children 12 and under; under 2 years of age admitted free. For more information, call 412.323.7235, or visit www.aviary.org.

Upcoming Events -

- History of the Clarion CBC - November 9
- Members' Night, Silent Auction & Cookie Exchange - December 14
- Clarion Christmas Bird Count - Saturday, December 19; meet at BJ's Eatery at Knox about 5:30 p.m.



Consider the environment and sign up for e-Drummer today! Call or email Deb Freed at dfreed208@comcast.net

NOTICE

Our meetings are now being held in the Science Technology Center, Rm 136.
Parking is available along Page Street – take Payne Street (next to the Tippin Gym) to Page Street, and enter at the side door of the building; also in Lot # 11, opposite Greenville Ave.



Hosting our Meetings
November: Judy Montgomery
December: Cookie Exchange

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Clarion, PA 16214

P.O. Box 148

Seneca Rocks Audubon Society