



THE DRUMMER

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American Woodcock photo courtesy of Leonard Hamilton, South Dakota Birds and Birding

American Woodcock

Andrew Troutman, PGC

March 8 Program

Andrew Troutman of the Pennsylvania Game Commission will present our March program on the basic biology of the American Woodcock. Woodcock are classified as shorebirds, although they breed locally, in our shrubby fields and forest edges. Well-camouflaged and more often heard than seen, woodcock are known for their spectacular courtship flights at dusk, and you may be fortunate to see one doing the "rhumba" in broad daylight.

Andrew will explain the population trends for woodcock in Pennsylvania and how the Game

Commission works with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct yearly surveys to track the population and health of the bird. Andrew hopes that by the end of program, everyone there will be able to recognize the sound(s) of the woodcock.

Andrew became a deputy with the Commission in 1998 in the southern Clarion County district. He graduated from the Ross Leffler School of Conservation in March of 2008 and was placed in Bradford County. Since 2011, he has been in the southern Jefferson County district.

Spring Migrations of the Spotted Salamander and Wood Frog

Kurt Regester

April 12 Program



The spotted salamander is about six to ten inches long, usually black with yellowish-orange spots. They hibernate underground in winter in our hardwood forests, and breed in vernal pools.

A small brown frog in the woods is likely to be a wood frog. About two to three inches in length, they also breed in vernal pools, and are long-

distance migrants. Join us on April 12 to learn more about both of these fascinating creatures.

Kurt Regester is a professor of biology at Clarion University and instructor at University of Pittsburgh's Pymatuning Laboratory of Ecology. He teaches courses on Zoology, Wildlife Ecology, Population Biology, Animal Behavior, and Ornithology and a field-based course on the Ecology of Amphibians and Reptiles. Kurt conducts research on the ecology of amphibians and reptiles, with particular interests in disease ecology and the roles of salamanders in terrestrial and aquatic food webs. Kurt serves as associate editor for the journal *Herpetological Conservation and Biology* and is affiliated with the Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles and The Wildlife Society.



This Great-Horned Owl signed print was donated to our Chapter by the late Nola Lyons of Erie, formerly of Tionesta, PA. It is a 1969 Richard Sloan Lithograph, beautifully framed with rustic wood. It measures 29" x 35" including the frame. We will be selling raffle tickets at our meetings for the print.

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.

Programs at Cook Forest State Park

~Dale Luthringer

Saturday, March 11 at 7:30 am - 'Otter Watch' Please bring your binoculars and spotting scopes to the Park Office for a driving tour to otter hotspots along the National Wild & Scenic Clarion River. This is the prime time of the year to witness otter activity. Chances are good to observe otter sign such as slides, tracks, and carp kills along the banks of the river. Hot chocolate will be available at the Park Office to warm us up. (2 hrs)

Saturday, March 18 at 8:30 am - 'Eagle Watch' Please bring your binoculars and spotting scopes to the Park Office for a driving tour to eagle hotspots along the National Wild & Scenic Clarion River. This is the best time of the year to view bald eagles on their nests and find new nesting sites. Expect a long car-pool and aggressive hike to some of the better areas, but the rewards will be worth it. Hot chocolate and coffee will be available at the Park Office to warm us up. (3 hrs)



Short-eared Owl

Visit us on Facebook!

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

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

After heavy nighttime showers and a light drizzle to start the day, the rain ended and combined with moderate temperatures and little wind to give us nice weather for a fourth consecutive year. We had to scramble a little to get 17 vehicle participants (down from 22 last year), but 21 feeder watchers (20 last year) made a nice support group. In the end, we tallied 55 species, our highest total in eight years. Thanks to all involved.

The total number of birds was 7,559 – an increase of 856, or 13% over last year. That's right at our 30-year average of 7,545 and 11% above our last-ten-year average of 6,808. It's also our best result since the 2008-09 count. A job well done.

We're all aware of our failure to find a Short-eared Owl last year, ending our consecutive year streak at 28. The good news this year is that we've started a new streak as Mal Hays and Ron Montgomery found three flying when they arrived at Mt. Airy while Carole Winslow and Sue Courson notched another at Rankin Road. The most significant misses were Cedar Waxwing, now down to being seen 27 of 30 years, and Northern Flicker, missed for just the 4th year. No new birds were added to the count, so our 30-year total remains at 98.

Highlights include:

- two flocks totaling 33 Tundra Swans, a small flight spotted by Mike Leahy and Paulette Colantonio and 25 seen flying over the Clarion River by feeder watcher Terry Morrow;

- one American Black Duck hanging with some mallards, only our 2nd record, also spotted by Michael and Paulette;

- our only Ruffed Grouse flushed by Flo and Jim McGuire to maintain our perfect 30-year record;

- our only Northern Harrier, recorded by the Janice Horn, Jeff Hall, and Jennifer Conner team – a miss would have been only our second since the count began;

- a Merlin spied by Deb Freed, Ann Hunt, and Pat Conway, observed for just the 3rd year;

- a new high of four Rusty Blackbirds reported by Gary Edwards and Larry Towse, our 4th record;

- also high counts for Cooper's Hawk (9), Rock Pigeon (473), and Red-bellied Woodpecker (36).

Feeder watchers added our only Pine Siskins and Great Horned Owl, what a great asset to the count!

Dinner at Cozumel topped off the day and a good time was had by all.

Field birders were: Paulette Colantonio, Jennifer Conner, Pat Conway, Sue Courson, Pete Dalby, Gary Edwards, Deb Freed, Jeff Hall, Mal Hays, Janice Horn, Ann Hunt, Mike Leahy, Flo McGuire, Jim McGuire, Ron Montgomery, Larry Towse, Carole Winslow.

Feeder watchers were: Jack Best, Hendrika Bohlen, Cindy Bonner, Deborah Call, Bev Engle, Dorothy Flick, Ben Freed, Layne Giering, Brad Grant, Susan Joy, Tony Linnan, Charles Marlin, Judy Montgomery, Terry Morrow, Linda Osterberg, Melanie Parker, Kathy Pokrifka, Margy Port, Sally Reed, Barb Songer, and Dee Wenner.

Expected Arrival Dates

~Gary Edwards

Following is a list of approximate early dates of return for species migrating to or through the SRAS area in February, March and April and is based on my Venango County records. It is intended only as a guide and is limited to species expected annually.

February

10	American Wigeon
15	Long-tailed Duck
	Red-breasted Merganser
	Common Grackle
18	Turkey Vulture
21	American Woodcock

March

1	Killdeer
2	Long-tailed Duck
	Tree Swallow
3	Green-winged Teal
	Northern Shoveller
	Horned Grebe
4	Ruddy Duck
5	American Coot
6	Eastern Phoebe
9	Rusty Blackbird
10	Wilson's Snipe
	Bonaparte's Gull
13	Double-crested Cormorant
	Eastern Towhee
15	Blue-winged Teal
17	Common Loon
21	Osprey
22	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
25	Swamp Sparrow
26	Red-throated Loon
	Greater Yellowlegs
	Louisiana Waterthrush
27	Pine Warbler
28	Lesser Yellowlegs
31	Great Egret
	Chipping Sparrow

April

1	Greater Yellowlegs
	Savannah Sparrow
3	Barn Swallow
	Lincoln's Sparrow
	Swamp Sparrow
4	Yellow-rumped Warbler
6	Surf Scoter
	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
	Brown Thrasher
7	Northern Rough-winged Swallow
8	Broad-winged Hawk
	Solitary Sandpiper
	Forster's Tern
	Yellow-throated Warbler
9	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
	Pine Warbler
10	Common Tern
	Blue-headed Vireo
12	Spotted Sandpiper
	Upland Sandpiper
13	Great Egret
	Caspian Tern
15	Chimney Swift
	House Wren
16	Lesser Yellowlegs
17	Cliff Swallow
	Black-throated Green Warbler
	Blackburnian Warbler
19	Green Heron
	Ruby-throated Hummingbird
	Purple Martin
	Henslow's Sparrow
20	Whip-poor-will
	Northern Parula
	Black-and-White Warbler
21	Prairie Warbler
	Palm Warbler
22	Bank Swallow
	Nashville Warbler
	Yellow Warbler
	Ovenbird
	Common Yellowthroat
	Hooded Warbler
23	White-eyed Vireo

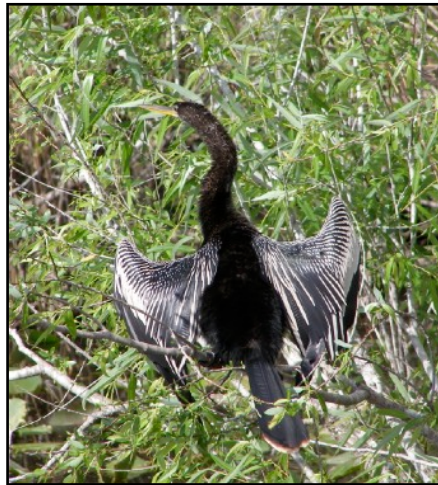
Yellow-throated Vireo
 Gray Catbird
 Chestnut-sided Warbler
 American Redstart

- 24 Wood Thrush
- Cerulean Warbler
- Northern Waterthrush
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak
- Baltimore Oriole
- 25 Eastern Wood-Pewee
- Eastern Kingbird
- Warbling Vireo
- Red-eyed Vireo
- Scarlet Tanager
- 26 Blue-winged Warbler
- Magnolia Warbler
- 27 Great-crested Flycatcher
- Indigo Bunting
- 28 Black-throated Blue Warbler
- Orchard Oriole
- 29 Least Flycatcher
- Swainson's Thrush

The Name Game

~Gary Edwards

To add to last issue's enlightening revelations:



Anhinga

Anhinga – This is the Tupi (the extinct natives of Brazil) name meaning “devil bird” or “snake bird.” It swims with only its neck out of water, resembling a snake and is commonly called snake bird or water turkey across its coastal range from South Carolina to Florida and across the Gulf states to Texas. Surprisingly, there are a number of accepted Pennsylvania records, almost all from southeastern counties.

Double-crested Cormorant – Cormorant is from the Latin “corvus” meaning “crow” and “marinus” meaning “pertaining to the sea.” Double-crested must be a name given by a museum worker as the crests are usually almost invisible in the field, unless it's breeding season and the wind is blowing. So it's a double-crested sea crow with invisible crests.

Merganser – Merganser is from the Latin “mergus” meaning “a diving bird” and “anser” a goose. The scientific name is *Mergus merganser*, so we have a diving, diving goose. Sounds a little redundant to me.

Scaup – An obsolete Scottish variation of scalp which meant not only a bald head but also a projecting mass of rocks and stones, etc. uncovered by the sea at low tide revealing beds of oysters and other shellfish. Scaup feed largely on mollusks.

Ring-necked Duck – Another bird apparently named in the museum. It has a chestnut ring around its neck but the ring is so narrow and blends in so well that it's almost an impossible field mark. Ring-billed Duck would fit well but that apparently was



Female Evening Grosbeak. A large flock is still being seen at “Yeany’s Maple” in Marienville, PA. Location is next to Pioneer Motel, on Route 66. Park in the public lot next to the Marienville Presbyterian Church across the street. Please view feeders from sidewalk, or corner of yard near Blue Spruce at split rail fence.

too easy. You've got to love some of these bird-naming guys – or not.

Bufflehead - means having a head like a buffalo – the feathers on the back of the head are thick, bushy, and elongated.

Harlequin Duck – A harlequin is a clown or buffoon, originally the best known comic servant in the 16th century Italian *Commedia dell'arte* characterized by outlandishly colored costumes. This beautiful duck's garb could be considered clownish & harlequin has a nice ring to it. By the way, it took a lot of work to find that Italian play reference to impress you 16th century theater buffs.



Northern Harrier - immature

Clarion County Fall 2016 Bird Sightings

~ Carole Winslow

Locations: Cook Forest (CF), Curllsville (CV), Mt. Airy (MA), Mt Zion/Piney Tract/SGL 330 (MZ)

For the second year, a pair of **Turkey Vultures** was found nesting in a small cave in the forested hillside outside of Clarion above the Clarion River (DF). Two fledgling birds were seen and photographed 8/11 at the nesting site showing their first signs of initial flight.

Northern Harriers continued to show steady

presence this year with 4 seen 11/21 (ML). Three of these included an adult male with 2 juveniles still at MZ where they nested this past summer, as well as a female at MA. **Northern Goshawk** is a species not regularly reported, but this season there were two sightings of note. A single adult was found near CF 11/4 (RN), and 2 adult birds were observed flying together 11/28 at a different location, but also near CF (BB).

An exceptional effort was made towards studying owl populations in *Clarion* this season which deserves more extensive write-up (MH, GE). Between 10/2 and 11/6, on 22 separate nights, various habitat in each township of the county was visited and investigated for the presence of owls, using passive listening as well as call playback. Owls of at least one species were found on 20 out of 22 nights, with approximately 25% seen for visual confirmation, as well as calls heard. Most of the visits were done at dusk between 9:30-10:00 pm with one week of visits done between 12am-2:30 am. Time of night, temperature, moonlight, moon phase, and wind were not noted to have any apparent effect on success.

Eastern Screech-Owls were found in all 22 townships, with 42 individuals. They were most commonly found in mixed second growth forest, often near homes, without conifers typically. Out of this total, 27 were found south of I-80, and 15 were north of I-80 where there is more predominately mature forest. Unusually, for the amount of habitat present, no **Great Horned Owls** were located during this period. This may have been due to the time of year that the effort occurred. **Barred Owls** were found in just 10 out of 22 townships, with 14 total individuals. They were most typically found in mixed, more mature forest without much understory and few conifers. Just three were found south of I-80 and 11 were north, where there is more available habitat. Only 2 **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were located, and these responded only to the fall, single note

vocalization, and not the toot or whine calls. They were both located northeast of Clarion in mixed second growth with more understory present. An observation was made during this survey that both barred and screech-owls were found responding to the calls of the other species at times.

Short-eared Owls were found back at their traditional wintering ground at MZ 11/23, with 3 birds seen at dusk at the main site (DD, CW). Two birds were also noted at MA at dusk 11/27 (MH). An effort was made this year to count migrating **Common Nighthawks** from a location outside of Strattanville over a week in August in the evening (MH). Seven birds were counted 8/9, 5 birds 8/15, and 14 birds 8/17. Unfortunately, no past data is available for comparison of numbers, however future efforts would be valuable in adding to data for this declining species. A single **Eastern Whip-poor-will** was seen at the main site at MZ 8/18, unusual for this season and at this location (SG).

Of all the woodpecker species, **Red-headed** is the only one not regularly reported, so a sighting this fall is worth mention. A single bird was seen outside of Clarion 10/9 (MM). It was not reported again and was a likely migrant at this location, although some habitat does exist in the county and it's possible breeding birds are here but not detected by birders. A **Merlin** was seen along the Redbank Valley Trail outside of New Bethlehem 9/14, where good habitat is available (J&AK). **Philadelphia Vireo** is not reported every year, but this season two were seen together outside of CV 9/22, feeding on Virginia creeper berries (CW). The last week of September found a marked increase in reports of **Red-breasted Nuthatch** across the state and also noted at feeders in Rimersburg and outside of CV with up to 5 birds seen (MM, CW).

Migrating **Swainson's Thrush** were detected in good numbers near CV 9/20 through 9/25 with a high of 5 seen 9/20 (CW). During the predawn hours of 9/20, at this same location, a good total of at least 1500 flight calls was detected. These were mostly made up of **Wood Thrush**, and Swainson's thrush calls, with a few **Gray-cheeked Thrush** also (CW). At the same location 10/3, another flight call survey was done over 30 minutes predawn in excellent calm and foggy conditions. Thrush calls were broken down into approximately 200 Swainson's, 40 hermit, 30 gray-cheeked and 10 wood (CW). These numbers represent calls heard and not actual numbers of individuals.

A single **Snow Bunting** was found in the fields near Kahle Lake 11/20 (GE). Along a rural road near CV, in scrubby field edge habitat, a single **Orange-crowned Warbler** was seen 10/12 (CW). This is within their typical migration period being a late migrant, and is one of the least reported warbler species for the county.

There were 3 singing **Henslow's Sparrows** at MZ 8/18, the last date of note for this grassland species this season (SG). **American Tree Sparrows** were late on return to their typical winter range near CV, with the first birds not seen until 11/14 (CW). Just two reports of **Lincoln's Sparrows** were noted, with 2 birds present in weedy field edges near CV 9/28 and a single bird nearby 10/3 (CW). **Pine Siskins** made a showing in October with one present at a feeder in Clarion 10/14 (TS), and another bird present at a feeder in Rimersburg sporadically from 10/14-11/22 (MM).

Observers: **Carole Winslow, 159 Moggey Rd, Sligo, PA 16255, (814) 745-3818, cjnal@windstream.net**, Brendyn Baptiste, Donald DeWolf, Gary Edwards, Deb Freed, Steve Gosser, Mal Hays, John and Avis Keener, Mike Leahy, Mark Moore, Richard Nugent, Tabassam Shah.

Upcoming Dates & Events

March 8- Andrew Troutman, PGC, American Woodcock

*March 25 - Conneaut Marsh Outing, begin at Custard's
8:00 to 9:00 am*

*April 12 - Kurt Regester, Spring Migrations of Spotted
Salamander and Wood Frog*

May 10 - Dan Gomola, Wildlife Photography

*May 27 - Oil Creek State Park Warbler Walk, Meet at
Blood Farm Day Use Area*

June 14 - Judith Acker, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds

"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress
can be judged by the way its animals are treated"

~Mathatma Gandhi

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