

# Seneca Rocks Drummer



October, 2004  
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Newsletter of the Seneca Rocks Audubon Society

Volume 21, No. 2

[www.senecarocksaudubon.org](http://www.senecarocksaudubon.org)



*Marsh Wren by Stan Kotala*

**Next Meeting – October 11**  
**Room 249, Peirce Science Center**  
Refreshments & conversation at 7:00 p.m.  
Program begins at 7:30 p.m.

## OCTOBER PROGRAM

by Gary Edwards

**A**t our October 11 meeting, our own Mike Leahy will present a slide program showing birds and birding areas of the east coast, from Maine to South Carolina and Florida. Mike and his family have taken vacation trips to the areas and he photographed a variety of common and not-so-common birds. During his travels he visited a number of State Parks, National Parks, and other birding areas. His slides of these areas will be supplemented by his impressions along with some nice bird shots. Please join us for an enjoyable evening of birds, snacks, and scintillating discussions. 🐦🐦🐦

## Field Trips

by Ron Montgomery

The remaining field trips for this year are as follows:

M&T 10/25&26	Allegheny Front Hawk Watch
Sat 3/26	Conneaut Marsh, PA
Sat 4/2	Presque Isle
Mon 4/25	Oil Creek State Park
Sat 5/14	Mt. Zion & Mt. Airy
Mon 6/20	Atlas Block Busting

### Details for Allegheny Front Hawk Watch

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

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

Some of us plan to stay overnight at the Shawnee Motel in Shellsburg. If you plan to stay at the Shawnee, the phone number is 814-733-2828; prices are \$34 to \$45 (same as last year), depending upon the number of people and beds. The McGuires have experience with a motor-

home site near Shellsburg; talk to them if you would like to try that option. We will probably go to the Jean Bonnet Restaurant about 5 miles east of Shellsburg on Monday evening. The convenience store next to the motel opens at 7:30AM, but the fresh donuts are often not done until 8:00.

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

Two hundred red-tails and a dozen golden eagles in a day at Allegheny Hawk Watch is not unusual. This trip is always an unpredictable adventure. Once we were driven out by snow and ice; last year we had to change our plans on Monday because of fog. It has always been fun. I hope you can join us.

(Please see page 3 of the *Drummer* for directions to Allegheny Front).

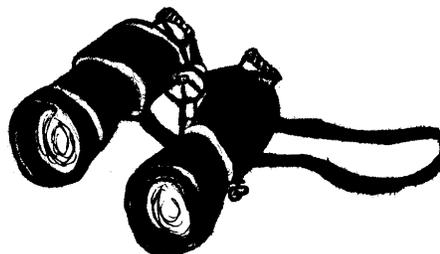


**SRAS Officers**

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Vice-President	Gary Edwards	676-3011
Secretary	OPEN	
Treasurer	Janice Horn	226-7367

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Newsletter	Flo McGuire	755-3672
Programs	Gary Edwards	676-3011



*Binoculars by Georgette Syster*

**Crow's Nest**

by President Deb Freed

Those confusing fall warblers. It took a second look and a key field mark to identify the bird.

Late in August a flurry of activity caught my eye in the sweet birch and river birch near my living room window. Titmice, black-throated greens, chickadees, goldfinches, red-eyed vireos, white-breasted nuthatches and a warbler with a white eye ring. What was it? The birds were foraging under leaves and along the trunk of the trees. I grabbed my trusty field guide while whispering the field marks to myself: white eye ring, yellow on top of the head, clear breast, two white wing bars. It just didn't fit anything.

I went back to my binoculars. At my second look I saw one of these birds with a faint rusty side. Was that a wet spot or color? Well, that turned out to be the key. The chestnut-sided warbler! Have you looked at both the non-breeding male and the first winter males? The differences between the first winter male and the adult breeding male plumage are indeed dramatic!

I now fully understand the phrase "confusing fall warblers" and the joy of making that positive identification.



## Judy's Cookie Bars

contributed by Judy & Ron Montgomery

Judy had several requests for her recipe for the Turtle Bars that she served at our September meeting. Cookie Fan Deb Freed suggested that she put the recipe in the newsletter as a public service! Here it is.

### Cookie Base:

2 cups flour  
1 cup brown sugar  
½ cup sugar  
½ cup butter  
1 ½ cups pecan halves

### Topping:

½ cup brown sugar  
2/3 cup butter  
1 twelve oz bag milk chocolate chips

Mix flour, sugar and butter until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Press into ungreased 13 x 9 inch pan. Sprinkle pecans evenly over mixture.

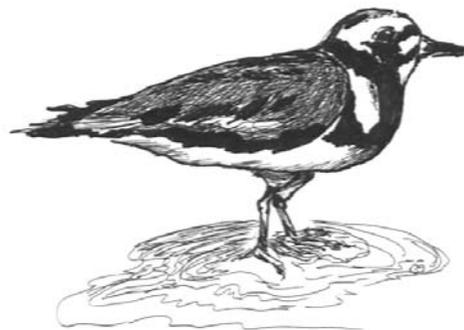
For topping, cook sugar and butter in small saucepan, stirring constantly, until mixture begins to boil. Boil one minute. Pour over pecans.

Bake at 350 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes, until firm. Immediately sprinkle chocolate chips over baked mixture and spread to cover.

Cool on wire rack, but cut into squares with downward pressure before completely cool. Makes about three dozen. ☺ ☺

### Allegheny Front Directions

On any road map, find Windber, PA, a few miles southeast of Johnstown on Rt. 56. From Windber, take Rt 160 to Central City. In Central City, Rt 160 turns sharply Right. Don't follow. Go straight on Main Street 0.4 mi to a "T" on Shaffer Mt Rd. Turn Left. Go 1 mile to first Right, which is Lambert Mt Road. Follow Lambert 3 miles to "crossroad" where the main road goes left – continue straight ahead for 1/2 mi to a driveway with a blue gate on the right. Follow the driveway to the parking lot.



*Ruddy Turnstone by Georgette Syster*

## Conneaut Field Trip

by Ruth Schurr

September 11th was a beautiful day to spend up along the beaches of Lake Erie. Jerry Stanley and wife Kathy were our experts helping identify about forty species, mostly shore birds. We were joined by nine birders from the Bartramian chapter plus Jerry and Kathy's dog, Lark.

Attending from our chapter were Flo and Jim McGuire, Ron Montgomery, Gary Edwards, Gil Twiest, Karl and Ruth Schurr, and Karl's sister Jan.

Among the species seen were: Canada Goose, American Wigeon, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Green-winged Teal, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Green Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Turkey Vulture, 2 Bald Eagles, Cooper's Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Black-bellied Plover, American Golden-Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Ruddy Turnstone, Red Knot, Sanderling, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Snipe, Franklin's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Caspian Tern, Common Tern, Forster's Tern, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Chimney Swift, Belted Kingfisher, Blue Jay, Gray Catbird, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, and American Goldfinch.



## Thank You Kathy, Our Armchair Activist

by Deb Freed

**K**athy Janik has been our legislative monitor and issues educator for a number of years, at least as long as I have been president and while I was vice president. She faithfully contributed to the *Drummer* current information and action steps to safeguard wildlife and habitat. Her work assignments will now prevent her from continuing in that position.

Anyone with interest in reading and highlighting for our members the materials assembled by Audubon, please contact Deb Freed.

Thank you, Kathy. We hope to see you at our meetings and events when your schedule allows.



### Bird Seed Sale

**T**he SRAS fall Bird Seed Sale is one of our main fund-raisers. The sale will be handled differently this year. Instead of just one day for pick-up, you will have a week, and you can pick up your seed in the store anytime during Agway's regular hours.

Order deadline is Friday, October 22, for pick-up Monday, November 8<sup>th</sup> through Saturday, November 13<sup>th</sup>. Please see the order form in this *Drummer* or on our website. Order and checks should be sent to Janice Horn.

If you would like to order through the Oil City Agway, please contact Gary Edwards at 676-3011.



The owl drawing was contributed by **Rebecca Wise**, a friend of Margaret Buckwalter's. Rebecca drew it when she was 15. Thanks, Rebecca!

### Birding Puzzle

What is the First Rule of Birding? Fill in the blanks and the selected letters will spell the answer. See clues below. (Answers will be in the next *Drummer*).

1.     ---|-----
2.     -  |-----
3.     ---|-----
4.     ---|-----
5.     ---|-----
6.     ---|-----

1. Grebe of old.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ tails used to be a favorite nesting material of Chipping Sparrows.
3. Only native NA species of perching duck.
4. Home décor, to a Great-crested.
5. A warbler is named for this state.
6. Part of a (western) warbler's Latin name, means "very small".





*Common Raven photos by Ron Montgomery*

## Raven Quest

by Pat Conway

**H**ow some birds get their names has always been a puzzlement to me. The red-bellied woodpecker, for example, has a redder head than it has a belly. Unless you turn the bird upside down and examine it closely you wouldn't know it has a "reddish" belly. Other examples are the ring-necked duck (you have to look real hard to see the ring); common nighthawk (not a hawk at all); hairy woodpecker (which has no hair that I can see); tufted titmouse (I thought a mouse was a rodent); and the ovenbird - although its name is derived from the appearance of its nest, which looks like a Dutch oven, most people wouldn't know that, would they? Who's naming these birds anyway?

Birds appropriately named, in my opinion: black-capped chickadee, blue jay, bluebird, red-headed woodpecker, gray catbird (it does sound like a cat), barn owl (it likes to live in barns), great blue heron (it's big, it's blue, and it's a heron).

At any rate, in April I went in search of the common raven, which I discovered isn't common at all in this area, but I went looking for it anyway because my friends Lisa and Aidan told me they had discovered a nest near their home. Early on the designated day I met two birding friends, Ron and Ann, outside of Summerville, PA, and we joined Lisa and Aidan at their house to confirm the raven for the 2nd PBBA. We trekked off into

the early dawn, down a deserted railroad track in high spirits. Even though we were eager to see the raven nest, we dawdled along the tracks examining flora, fauna and other interesting stuff. I picked up several rusty railroad spikes as a memento. To our glee, the parent raven appeared overhead uttering its displeasure at our intrusion with a hoarse "croake, croake." Ron snapped several digital pictures of it in flight, which showed its fan-like, rounded tail.



In sandals, Aidan (14), led the way nimbly across the uneven tracks until we reached the trestle, about a quarter mile from their house. The trestle was about 30 feet high. There were no guard rails to speak of, which gave me a queasy feeling in the pit of my stomach. Not overly fond of heights, I gingerly hopped from tie to tie, keeping my eyes on Aidan, who was already at the nest site peering down with wide-eyed wonder waiting patiently for us. I was wondering, too. Why was I thirty feet in the air without anything to hold onto, and where was my safety net!

We huddled excitedly together in the middle of the trestle, keeping as far from the edges as possible. To see the nest we had to lie down on our stomachs and look down through the ties. It took a bit of skill to do this, and a few minutes for our eyes to adjust to the light. Taking turns, we peeked at the nest of sticks and deer hair, built under the trestle abutment pillar, tucked away from the wind and rain and skillfully hidden from predators - a true sign of the ravens' resourcefulness. Three young ravens were nestled inside. As we peered cautiously into the nest, one parent raven flew overhead making its presence known, then disappeared. Lisa and Aidan feared that one parent had been killed, since they hadn't seen both ravens in several weeks.

Prone, Ron put his arms through the railroad ties and snapped several pictures of the nest and young. My photo attempt wasn't as successful. I was worried one of us would twist an ankle or sail over the edge in our excitement. We managed a group photo session and picked our way carefully back over the tracks and off of the trestle. Whew! Retracing our steps back to Lisa and Aidan's, we looked at the digital pictures, said our good-byes and headed home.

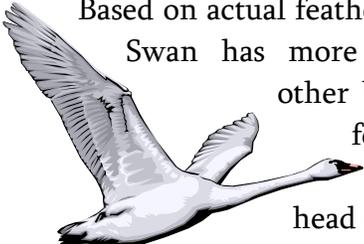
Shortly after returning home, I discovered that the wallet I had in my coat pocket with my driver's license, military I.D. card, and other cards of importance was missing. In my mind, I retraced my steps of that day and concluded that it must have fallen out of my pocket while I was lying face down on the railroad tracks. How ironic! I had lost my own identity while seeking to confirm that of the "uncommon", common raven!

After several anxious hours of trying to locate Ann (she had driven her car that morning), a frantic search of her car unveiled the missing wallet under a pillow in the back seat. My relief at finding the wallet was undescrivable. Since it was nearly dusk, I wasn't relishing the thought of us crawling through the dense underbrush on hands and knees, under the railroad trestle in quest of my identity with flashlights. It was a happy ending to be sure, but in this quest to identify the common raven I had to meekly ask myself, "Hey, who the heck named me anyway?"

Raven Update 09/01/04: Lisa and Aidan have informed me that the ravens are still in the area. They are hoping the ravens will stay. 🦉🦉

### Did You Know?

Based on actual feather count, the Tundra Swan has more feathers than any other bird. It has 25,216 feathers, 80% of which are on the head and neck.



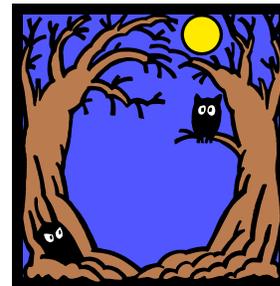
## LOGO CONTEST

The logo contest will be extended to allow designers to create a logo in whatever shape supports the design. We are not limiting the shape to the arc under the current masthead as previously announced. The board may choose one design for a patch and another for the *Drummer* masthead.



Put on your creative caps and break out the crayons and pens. We'd like to have a patch and masthead by December.

This contest is not limited to our members. Do you know a talented student, family member or friend? Give them a call and let's see what ideas can be put on paper. Send any logo/masthead designs to Deb Freed, 208 Briar Hill Drive, Clarion, PA 16214.



### Owl Prowl at Cook Forest

Dale Luthringer, Cook Forest naturalist, is holding an "Owl Prowl" on Wednesday, October 6, at 8 p.m. Please bring your flashlights and meet at the Log Cabin Inn Environmental Learning Center for an evening owl prowl. Explore Cook Forest at night for Pennsylvania's owls as we car-pool to owl hotspots in the park. Barred, Great Horned, Northern Saw-whet Owls and Eastern Screech-owls have been known to make an appearance. (2 hrs).

## SRAS Bird Seed Sale

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

ORDER BY FRIDAY OCT 22 , 2004 PICK-UP from MONDAY NOV 8 to  
SATURDAY NOV 13

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ SRAS member Y\_\_\_ N\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Quantity	Seed Type	Lbs	Unit Price	Total
_____	Classic Blend 55% sunflower	40 lb	\$18	_____
_____	Premium Blend 30% sunflower	50 lb	\$15	_____
_____	Premium Blend	20 lb	\$ 7	_____
_____	Deluxe Blend 25% sunflower	50 lb	\$13	_____
_____	Deluxe Blend	20 lb	\$ 6	_____
_____	Econo Blend 12% sunflower	50 lb	\$10	_____
_____	Econo Blend	20 lb	\$ 5	_____
_____	Finch Treat	50 lb	\$30	_____
_____	Finch Treat	10 lb	\$ 8	_____
_____	Sunflower Blend	50 lb	\$17	_____
_____	Sunflower Blend	25 lb	\$10	_____
_____	Black Oil Sunflower	50 lb	\$13	_____
_____	Black Oil Sunflower	25 lb	\$ 7	_____
_____	Grey-Striped Sunflower	50 lb	\$19	_____
_____	Sunflower Hearts	50 lb	\$30	_____
_____	Sunflower Hearts	10 lb	\$ 8	_____
_____	Cracked Corn	50 lb	\$ 8	_____
_____	Cracked Corn	per lb	\$.35	_____
_____	Niger Seed	25 lb	\$19	_____
_____	Niger Seed	10 lb	\$ 8	_____
_____	Hanging Suet Feeder	28 oz	\$ 4.50	_____
_____	Hanging P-Butter Suet Feeder	28 oz	\$ 4.50	_____
_____	Beef Suet Cake	12 oz	\$.80	_____
_____	Peanut Butter Suet Cake	12 oz	\$.80	_____

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

## Looking Ahead—Upcoming Programs

November 8 – Jerry Lucot – “Florida Birds”  
December 13 – Members’ Night



### Hosting our upcoming meetings:

October - Barbara Songer  
November - Hendrika Bohlen  
December - Ruth and Karl Schurr  
February - Jim Wilson and Gary Edwards  
March - Fran and Jack Williams  
May - Kathy Pokrifka

## Louisiana Waterthrush Longevity

Dr. Terry Master of East Stroudsburg University posted the following to PABIRDS on May 10, 2004:

I thought I would pass along an exciting bit of information regarding longevity in Louisiana Waterthrushes. I banded an individual on May 5, 1995 on Van Campen's Brook in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area while doing some preliminary testing of techniques for future waterthrush studies.

The bird has returned to the same territory every year since then making him at least 10 years old. Graduate students Greg George, Jim Sheehan and I caught the bird today to check his band number since he had lost his color band.

This easily eclipses the Bird Banding Laboratory's record for Louisiana Waterthrush, which is 7 years, 11 months.

SENECA ROCKS AUDUBON SOCIETY  
C/O SHERRY VOWINCKEL, MEMBERSHIP CHAIR  
59 MAPLE DRIVE  
SHIPPENVILLE, PA 16254