



THE DRUMMER

www.senecarocksaudubon.org



March/April 2018

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Steve's Adventures in Birding

Steve Gosser

March 14 Program

According to Steve, fifteen years ago he knew practically nothing about birds. He became interested in nature photography, and soon discovered that birds made wonderful photo subjects. It wasn't long before he was completely addicted to birding and photographing his fine feathered friends. Since then Steve's photos have appeared in various magazines, newspapers, journals, and many websites and blogs. He has had opportunities to hold gallery exhibits of his bird photography. Steve loves to be able to show an audience how beautiful, intriguing, and absolutely amazing birds are; he hopes to inspire others to notice birds and get into the wonderful hobby of birding. Come join us, sit back and enjoy Steve's colorful avian images.



eBird Presentation

Holly Merker

April 11 Program

This program caters to all birders, including those new to eBird. It is an exploration of how eBird is used by birders and researchers alike. If you have ever wondered "what's all the fuss about eBird?" this program will address those questions and more. For those already using eBird, you'll learn new ways this powerful tool can be of use to you from your own backyard, to your travels across the globe. Come learn how your bird sightings can make a difference for conservation science!

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

Holly Merker has been the Lead Reviewer and State Coordinator for Pennsylvania eBird since 2005 and is also on the eBird Hotspot Editing Team for Pennsylvania. Holly is an avid birder and a birding instructor for the American Birding Association and National Audubon. When not using eBird, Holly can be found teaching watershed ecology to thousands of school students annually in her job as a professional environmental educator in Downingtown, Chester County, PA.

Join us on April 11 to meet Holly Merker, to learn more about eBird and see the amazing results of our work as citizen scientists through eBird.

eBird Outing and Tutorial

Come join eBird State Coordinator Holly Merker for an "in-the-field" tutorial and birding trip before the program on April 11, where we will use the eBird Mobile App! On this outing, we will go over the best practices to use while eBirding in the field, and we will have fun finding birds together!

We will meet at Beaver Creek Nature Area at 3:00 pm. Time permitting, we will also go to Kahle Lake.

Conneaut Marsh Field Trip

The popular Conneaut Marsh Field Trip will be held on Saturday, March 24. Meet at Custards around 8:00 am; we will drive to the next stop at 9:00 am. We usually get a nice variety of migrating ducks, bald eagles, and sometimes rusty blackbirds.

Cook Forest Program

~ Dale Luthringer

Saturday, March 17 at 830am - '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 prime 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)

You might have a ? of buntings during migration.



Matching Game

~ Janice Horn

From a book by Matt Sewell published in 2017. If I gave the title I'd be revealing one of the answers.

There will be another game in our next issue.

Can you match these? Answers on page 8.

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| 1. A charm of | A. buntings |
| 2. A cloud of | B. eagles |
| 3. A convocation of | C. goldfinches |
| 4. A crown of | D. geese |
| 5. A deceit of | E. hawks |
| 6. A descent of | F. kingfishers |
| 7. An exaltation of | G. lapwings |
| 8. A kettle of | H. pelicans |
| 9. A mural of | I. owls |
| 10. A parliament of | J. woodpeckers |
| 11. A pod of | K. larks |
| 12. A skein of | L. bats |

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.

With A Little Help from Our Friends

~ Deb Freed

Yes, we don't often ask, but we do need a little help from our friends . . .

Christmas Bird Count Compiler

Seneca Rocks Audubon has participated in the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) annually since 1986. It is one of our signature events. Gary Edwards, our current CBC compiler, enters the species and total numbers on the Audubon website set up to collect the data. It involves a little computer time and some organization of the teams. Gary and the Seneca Rocks Audubon Leadership Team are looking for someone willing to learn what is involved and work along with the "Team" for the 2018 CBC. All the forms and procedures are in place and ready to go. It's fun and interesting to be the first person to compile the results and see what was counted on the count day!

If you'd like to learn a little more about the CBC Compiler position, please contact Gary at gedwards@csonline.net

Donations for Tamarack Wildlife Rehabilitation & Education Center

Over the years members of SRAS have visited Tamarack Wildlife Rehabilitation & Education Center. Several members have even taken injured wildlife to the center. The center has a wish list of items and we have two members who will gladly collect and deliver items to the center. Keith Hileman and Alice Thureau will be prepared to collect donations in April and May at our programs at the Clarion Library. Below is a list of items needed. Learn more about Tamarack at www.tamarackwildlife.org

Tamarack's Wish List

- Bleach
- Liquid laundry detergent for High Efficiency Machines (HE)
- Water bottles for small mammals
- 10 gallon tanks/aquariums for small mammals (used is fine),
- 10 gallon tank screen lids for mammals
- Duct Tape
- Mixed Bird Seed
- Black Oil Sunflower Seed
- Thistle Seed for finches
- Wood Pine Shavings for bedding
- Forever Stamps
- Old Pillow Cases, Flat Sheets
- Sterile Saline or Lactated Ringers (up to 2.5 dextrose) IV bags
- Cardboard Boxes (esp. computer printer size) for temporarily housing birds
- Vetwrap, Coflex or similar product: 2", and 1/2" widths.
- Frozen archery hunted pure venison to feed hawks, owls and eagles
- Frozen wild caught fish to feed eagles
- Laptop Computer and Computer Projector
- Trail Camera
- Baby monitor with video screen(allows visiting public to view wildlife without being seen)

Think outside the box

Because Tamarack is a unique place, it offers unique ways to help. Here are a few:

- Live minnows—we often treat birds that require live fish, but these are extremely expensive to purchase. Donated minnows are a huge help.

- Frozen fish and venison for birds of prey. Do you have a freezer full of last year's crappie or deer steaks? Give it to Tamarack!



photo from Tamarack website

Arrival Dates

February, March & April

- 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. It is intended only as a guide and does not include ducks or uncommon/rare species.

February 10- Killdeer; Red-winged Blackbird
 February 15- Common Grackle
 February 18- Turkey Vulture; Fox Sparrow
 February 21- American Woodcock
 February 26- Wilson's Snipe
 March 2- Tree Swallow
 March 3- Horned Grebe
 March 4- Sandhill Crane
 March 5- American Coot
 March 6- Eastern Phoebe
 March 9- Rusty Blackbird; Eastern Meadowlark;
 Winter Wren
 March 10- Bonaparte's Gull; American Pipit; Field
 Sparrow
 March 13- Double-crested Cormorant; Eastern Towhee
 March 17- Common Loon
 March 21- Osprey
 March 22- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
 March 25- Swamp Sparrow
 March 26- Greater Yellowlegs; Louisiana Waterthrush
 March 27- Pine Warbler
 March 28- Lesser Yellowlegs
 March 30- Barn Swallow
 March 31- Chipping Sparrow
 April 1
 - Greater Yellowlegs
 - Savannah Sparrow
 - Barn Swallow
 April 2
 - Hermit Thrush
 April 4
 - Yellow-rumped Warbler
 April 6
 - Surf Scoter
 - Ruby-crowned Kinglet
 - Brown Thrasher
 April 7
 - No. Rough-winged Swallow
 April 8
 - Broad-winged hawk
 - Solitary Sandpiper
 - Forster's Tern
 - Yellow-throated Warbler
 April 9
 - Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
 - Pine Warbler
 April 10
 - Common Tern
 - Blue-headed Vireo



April 12
 - Spotted Sandpiper
 - Upland Sandpiper
 April 13
 - Caspian Tern
 - Great Egret
 April 15
 - Chimney Swift
 - House Wren
 April 16
 - Lesser Yellowlegs
 April 17
 - Cliff Swallow
 - Black-throated Green Warbler
 - Blackburnian Warbler
 April 19
 - Green Heron
 - Ruby-throated Hummingbird
 - Purple Martin
 - Henslow's Sparrow
 April 20
 - Whip-poor-will
 - Northern Parula
 April 21
 - Prairie Warbler
 - Palm Warbler
 April 22
 - Bank Swallow
 - Nashville Warbler
 - Yellow Warbler
 - Ovenbird
 - Common Yellowthroat
 - Hooded Warbler
 April 23
 - White-eyed Vireo
 - Yellow-throated Vireo
 - Gray Catbird
 - Chestnut-Sided Warbler
 April 24
 - Wood Thrush
 - Cerulean Warbler
 - Northern Waterthrush
 - Rose-breasted Grosbeak
 - Baltimore Oriole
 April 25
 - Eastern Wood Pewee
 - Eastern Kingbird
 - Warbling Vireo
 - Red-eyed Vireo
 - Scarlet Tanager
 April 26
 - Blue-winged Warbler
 - Magnolia Warbler
 April 27
 - Great Crested Flycatcher
 - Indigo Bunting
 April 28
 - Black-throated Blue Warbler
 - Orchard Oriole
 April 29
 - Least Flycatcher
 - Swainson's Thrush



Nine Cooper's Hawks were tallied on our CBC; photo by Meg Kolodick

31st Annual Clarion Christmas Bird Count

~Gary Edwards

It was a wonderful day in the neighborhood as the weather cooperated for the fifth consecutive year, providing moderate temperatures, virtually no wind, and plenty of sunshine. Six inches of snow a few days earlier provided a good viewing background and helped to congregate the birds a little after the unseasonably warm December to that point. Twenty vehicle participants (17 last year), including a newbie Nick Kolodick and Phil Spring, together with 17 feeder watchers (21 last year), combined to tally 55 species, equaling last year and three above the overall average. On the other hand, the total number of birds counted was just over 6,000, about 25% below average.

Two years ago we didn't have a Short-eared Owl after a 28-year consecutive streak. Last year we started anew by logging four. This year we totaled

11 Short-eareds at four locations, our third highest total.

Other highlights were:

3 Great Blue herons, a new high;

9 Cooper's Hawks, tying last year's high;

a Northern Goshawk, found by Mal Hays, Ron Montgomery, and Larry Towse. It's the fifth year for a Gos;

Mike Leahy had his best-ever owling night with 6 Screech, 4 Great Horneds, 5 Barreds, and a Saw-whet. He and Eva Palmer also tallied 5 of the 11 Short-eareds;

4 Common Ravens (2nd highest total);

1 Field Sparrow, the first in five years;

1 Fox Sparrow, our third year and first since 1999;

3 Swamp Sparrows, the first in six years;



Swamp Sparrows had not been seen on our CBC for 6 years; photo by Meg Kolodick

Feeder watchers added our only Gray Catbird and Purple Finch. The most significant misses were Ruffed Grouse, first ever miss, Northern Harrier and American Robin, both miss #2. No new birds were added to the count, so our 31-year total remains at 98.

The annual dinner at Cozumel was well attended and a good time was had by all. Thanks, everyone.

Field birders were: Jennifer Conner, Pat Conway, Kurt Crosbie, Pete Dalby, Gary Edwards, Deb Freed, Jeff Hall, Mal Hays, Janice Horn, Ann Hunt, Nick Kolodick, Mike Leahy, Ron Montgomery, Mark Moore, Eva Palmer, Phil Spring, Larry Towse, Jack Williams, Jim Wilson, and Carole Winslow.

Feeder watchers were: Jack Best, Hendrika Bohlen, Cindy Bonner, Deborah Call, Sue Faunce, Ben Freed, Layne Giering, Brad Grant, Susan Joy, Tony Linnan, Judy Montgomery, Terry Morrow, Sally Reed, Carol Riffer, Ruth Schurr, Barb Songer, and Alice Thureau.

52nd Annual Pleasantville Christmas Bird Count

According to count coordinator Russ States of the Bartramian Audubon Society, the 52nd Pleasantville Christmas Bird Count was held on December 31, 2017, with 16 field participants and three feeder watchers.

A total of 58 species were reported. (Including a Northern Bobwhite, probably an escaped bird, but counted after Russ consulted the CBC Coordinator.) Total number of individuals was the highest ever, at 4,531. It was the first time on the count for Northern Pintail, Short-eared Owl, and Lapland Longspur. It was only the second time for Horned Lark, and only the third time for Snow Bunting, which was last seen on the 1989 CBC. Notable species were Red-shouldered Hawk, American Kestrel, and Brown-headed Cowbird. It was the highest number ever for Mallard, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Red-shouldered Hawk, Hairy Woodpecker, and Dark-eyed Junco.

Eight species have been seen all 52 years; eight species have been seen 51 of the 52 years; nineteen have only been seen on one count, three of which we had this year.

Thanks to all who participated in
our February Bird Seed Sale!



Saw-whet Owl Nest Box Project

~ Photo and article by Gary Edwards

Each autumn, Northern Saw-whet Owls migrate south from their primary range in Canada to winter in the Eastern United States. In spring, most return but some remain and apparently nest. Confirming nesting is difficult because these tiny owls nest in holes, roost in conifers, and become secretive while nesting.

In Spring 2000 a statewide project was initiated to determine if, and where, Saw-whets nest. The project was timed to begin after the Saw-whet northward migration concluded. During the project, Saw-whets responded to taped calls in a number of Venango and Clarion County locations. While that did not prove nesting, it was a hopeful sign.

In an attempt to document Saw-whet breeding in our area, SRAS will be erecting nest boxes in Oil Creek State Park in Venango County and yet to be determined sites in Clarion and Forest Counties. The boxes will be periodically monitored for at least the next five years. For only \$25, you (or whomever you designate) may adopt one of the nest boxes. In return, you will receive a certificate with the nest box number and location along with a picture of the box after it is erected. If the box is utilized by an owl or other critter, we'll notify you. If successful, we'll be so happy that there may even be a prize for the first box used by a Saw-whet. Also, there will be a designated section on our website where the progress of the project can be viewed at any time.

At present, we have 25 boxes available for adoption. Be the first in your neighborhood to get one. Send your check, payable to SRAS, to Box 148, Clarion, PA 16214. Also provide the name you would like on the certificate and contact information (including an email address if possible).



Sabine's Gull at Kahle Lake, photo by Jeffrey Hall

Clarion County Fall 2017 Pennsylvania Birds Report

~ Carole Winslow

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

This year there were just two species of note for waterfowl. The first were eight **American Wigeon** seen at KL 9/21 (ME,LS). This is a couple of weeks early for their typical migration period. A **Long-tailed Duck** made an appearance in an unusual location, being present near the dam on Redbank Creek in New Bethlehem from 10/30-11/6 (J&AK, MM). Also at this location, a **Great Egret** was seen from 8/19-8/23 (J&AK, MM). **Northern Harriers** were noted for the season but with only several reports this year. A single bird was present at CV strips 8/3 (DF,BG,DK), and again 9/4 (TR). Another single bird, likely in migration, was seen flying over fields near CV 10/13 (CW). While there is ample habitat in the county **Sandhill Cranes** are not reported every season, so it was notable to find four in the cornfields near KL 10/9 (GE,RS). Also at this location, four **Wilson's Snipe** were located along the shoreline 9/21 (ME,LS). This species is likely present more than reported in fall but the right habitat is not always visible to birders from accessible locations.

Certainly the most notable bird for the season was a beautiful first cycle **Sabine's Gull** found at KL 9/5 and continuing through 9/8 (GE,J&AK, JS, JM,CW, et al.) Many observers were able to enjoy and

photograph this rare gull, that almost certainly represented the first record for the county. For comparison, a single **Bonaparte's Gull** was present at this location for the same period (GE, JS, JM, CW, et al.) Two **Forster's Terns** were seen also at KL 9/6, and while not as uncommon, still worthy of note (MD, GM).

For the second year, a search for **Northern Saw-Whet Owls** was undertaken by a dedicated observer and had increased success this year with five birds found during the first half of October (MH,RM,LT). This search was done using call playback of the toot and whine calls and it was noted that a single bird was found at five different locations. These locations were around the towns of Clarion and Shippensburg and in mixed second growth forest habitat, usually with a nearby overgrown brushy field or power line cut. Four of the birds responded with a whine call and one responded with what was described as a winter one-note call. **Short-eared Owls** were found in a new area this fall due to increased birder effort. One bird was seen at MA 11/24 and two were found at a new location south of Callensburg on reclaimed strip mine fields 11/28 (MH). Two birds were found at MZ 11/29, with one on Stockdill Rd and one at the main parking area location (GE, MH, JW).

For the second year a watch site was set up along the Clarion River north of the town of Clarion, at Mill Creek Boat Launch, for a **Common Nighthawk** observation point. Starting 8/14, counts were done regularly through 9/10 (MH, LT, R&TG, CW). The season total for this year was 567. The counting time period was approximately 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm with variation due to daylight length. Peak days were 8/26-9/6 with the highest count of 236 on 8/30. With nighthawks being in decline, it is hoped that this data collection can help in the study of this species. Elsewhere in the county, two nighthawks were also reported at dusk near CV 9/1 (CW), and two during dawn hours at KL 9/6 (AK). At the same location as the nighthawk count, it was very notable that up to two **Eastern Whip-poor-wills** were also heard calling at dusk 8/28 - 9/1, definitely a rarely reported species for this late in the season (MH, LT, R&TG, CW).

The only falcon report for the season was that of a **Merlin** at KL 9/7 (GE, KSJ). Flycatchers also just have one record of note, that of a rather early

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher seen on the RVT near Lawsonham 8/31 (MH,RH,FM). Near this same area of the RVT came the only notable vireo record as well, a **Philadelphia Vireo** seen 9/7 (MH,RH,FM).



Swainson's Thrush photo by Flo McGuire

Near CV, several nocturnal flight call counts were conducted during migration from 9/6 -10/1 (CW). Generally **Gray-cheeked Thrush** calls are the least recorded, and this year calls were first heard 9/6 with just two calls. This increased slowly to six on 9/15 and then over 30 calls on 9/16 and 9/22. One was also heard during daylight hours calling up in black gum and sassafras trees 9/20. **Swainson's Thrush** were heard on each count done through the time period noted, with the peak 9/16 when a remarkable 2000+ calls were heard during 16 minutes, and 9/22 with 1000+ calls in 27 minutes. Note that these numbers represent calls heard and not actual bird numbers. At this location, one or two birds were also present during daylight hours on five occasions between 9/6-9/22. A single bird was also reported at KL 9/6 (AK). Most often in fall this species is found not on the ground but in trees or shrubby tangles where fruit or berries are present, including species such as black gum, sassafras, as well as wild grapes, poison ivy and Virginia creeper. **Hermit Thrush** migrate later in the season and the only flight calls of this species were two that were counted 10/1. Three birds were also noted near Clarion 10/18 (MH,RH, FM).

Just three warbler species were worth a mention this year, with the first being **Northern Waterthrush**, one that is often not reported in fall.

Visit us on Facebook!

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

This bird was seen at KL 9/9 (BB). A rather late female **Yellow Warbler** was reported at Beaver Creek Nature Area 9/6 (MD). A **Yellow-throated Warbler** continued to be present and singing at RVT at Lawsonham rather late, heard there 8/4 where it was present throughout the breeding season (RN,CW). One sparrow species of note was **Lincoln's Sparrow**, near CV, with four sightings 9/18, 9/22, 10/1 and 10/2 (CW). The 9/22 sighting was significant for having three birds seen together, which is rather unusual for this sparrow. Just a single **Rusty Blackbird** was noted this season, with a bird heard calling in a flock of **Red-winged Blackbirds** near CV 10/8 (CW).

Observers: Carole Winslow, 159 Moggey Rd, Sligo PA 16255, (814) 745-3818,

cjwinslow94@gmail.com, Brendyn Baptiste, Louis Bevier, Bill Chambers, Lewis Crowell, Michael David, Gary Edwards, Mary Eyman, John Flannigan, Donna Foyle, Ron & Tracy George-Snyder, Barbara Griffith, Jeffrey Hall, Mal Hays, Margaret Higbee, Roger Higbee, Bonnie & Galen Ingram, Deborah Kalbfleisch, John & Avis Keener, Andy Keister, Jeff McDonald, Flo McGuire, Geoff Malosh, Ron Montgomery, Richard Nugent, Rich Rehrig, Tessa Rhinehart, Theo Rickert, Steve Schmit, Liz Spence, Kate St.John, Jerry Stanley, Russ States, Larry Towse, Patricia & Richard Williams, Jim Wilson.

Answers to Matching Game

1-C, 2-L, 3-B, 4-F, 5-G, 6-J, 7-K, 8-E, 9-A, 10-I, 11-H, 12-D



Fox Sparrow had not been seen on the Clarion CBC since 1999; photo by Meg Kolodick

Upcoming Dates & Events

March 14 - Steve Gosser, "Steve's Adventures in Birding"

March 24 - Conneaut Marsh Trip, meet at Custards 8:00 to 9:00 am

April 11 - eBird Outing at Beaver Creek, 3:00 pm; Holly Merker, eBird Presentation at our meeting

May 12 - PA Migration Count

May 19 - Warbler Walk at Oil Creek State Park, Blood Farm, 8:00 am



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

*Between every two pines is
a doorway to a new world.*

- John Muir

Seneca Rocks Audubon Society
P.O. Box 148
Clarion, PA 16214