



THE DRUMMER



www.senecarocksaudubon.org

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March-May 2024

SRAS ~ PO Box 148 ~ Clarion, PA 16214

Editor, Cindy Bonner

37th Annual Clarion CBC, December 23, 2023

By Jim McGuire, Compiler

The Clarion Christmas Bird Count started in the count year 1987, although the count was actually conducted January 2, 1988 and the low temperature was 10 degrees and a high of 26 degrees with clear skies. This year's low was around 37 degrees and a high of 44 degrees with overcast conditions. This year's weather seemed to be mild enough that birds were not seen at feeders as in past years, however our observers persisted and found the birds anyway.

One bird missing for a few years was the Ruby Crowned Kinglet (banding code RIKI as in the song "Ricki don't lose that number") found by Pat Conway and Ann Hunt. Another relatively rare bird was a Merlin found by Mike Leahy and Paulette Colantonio in Knox. The Merlins are becoming more common breeders in conifer trees in Urban settings. On the other end of the spectrum, Jim McGuire brought in Margaret and Roger Higbee and Gloria Laimer from the Todd Bird Club of Indiana, PA. (Ringers) to help do his section and they still could not find a Northern Cardinal!! Gloria did however find the Brown Creepers.



Merlin, Photo by Dot Monohan



Eastern Screech Owl, Photo by Meg Kolodick

The other topic of excitement at the CBC luncheon were the 21 Eastern Screech Owls found by Mal Hays and Vickie Gotaskie. Not many others would get up at 3 a.m. and go owling, but it paid off for them. They also found five Great Horned Owls calling spontaneously plus one Saw Whet Owl. Just to show off, Mal's group also found a Northern Shrike later in the day.

Another great find this year was by Alie Lewandowski with Gary Edwards and Nick Kolodick of two Hermit Thrushes (one singing). One other Hermit Thrush was found near Piney Tract by Eric Schill. Gary's crew also found four Northern Flickers. Eric Schill also found two flocks of Pine Siskin (59) and one of two reports of Purple Finch, the other by feeder watcher Julia Stewart.

Birds that made the High Count list or near HC were European Starlings at 3,563, Pileated Woodpecker at 19, American Crow at 928 was the highest in eight years as well as 16 Common Ravens. Eastern Bluebirds were high at 101 and American Robins at 408 plus Song Sparrows at 33. Carole Winslow (and Don) found two uncommon Winter Wrens.

Some Low Count numbers this year were Ruffed Grouse and Wild Turkey, but that may have been impacted by the limited amount of hiking. Other LC species were American Tree Sparrow, Cedar Waxwings, Tufted Titmouse, Northern Cardinal, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers.

The Short-Eared Owls didn't disappoint as we had a high average count of seven. They have been consistently seen every year but one and is the envy of the state. We are one of the few sites that they appear at regularly. Bald Eagles continue to be found regularly since the early 2000's as well as Red Bellied Woodpeckers, which have been expanding since 2000 and Common Ravens since 2014.

We had a total of 55 species, which is about normal and 8,203 individual birds seen or heard. The highest count was 72 in 2001 and the lowest was 42 in 2011.

THANK YOU to the 24 observers and four feeder watchers who made this possible, especially Mal Hays as route coordinator and Julia Stewart for organizing the feeder watchers, and a special thank you to Hendrika Bohlen, our most senior participant at 95. I had the pleasure of speaking with her the other day to get her report. She is a delightful lady who has been a member of the SRAS family for many years. She used to do the CBC with Margaret Buckwalter and the last few years she has been a faithful feeder watcher at her home in Marianne Estates. Hendrika told me she is looking forward to doing the Warbler Walk with Gary Edwards next spring.

See you all next year !!



CBC tally luncheon at Perkins, December 27, 2024

Member Night, December 2023

By Alice Thurau

Members and friends shared objects and entertaining stories on Member Night on December 13, 2023. The exchange made for a very enjoyable evening together.

There was a recording of strange starling calls (Michael), poor hunting saved by birding (Larry), an essay of birding for the New York Bird Atlas (Alie), free bird books from Eccles-Lesher Library, Rimersburg (Cindy), the unofficial "win" of Millcreek over Oil City at the Common Nighthawk watches (Gary), new owl boxes and a very successful owl prowl (Mal), backyard warblers (Nick), a pair of well-constructed nests (Georgie and Alice), a lawn to garden project (Alice), a donation of handmade stockings (Meg), a description of children excited over an osprey with a scope at Mono Lake, CA (Lillian), and lastly, the Seneca Rocks Audubon year in photos (Alice).

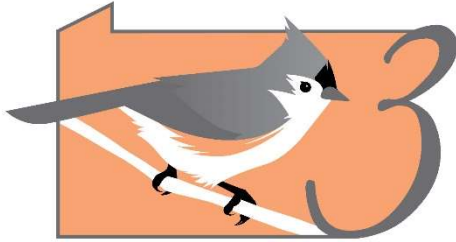


Winter Sowing Workshop, January 6, 2024

Twelve Bird-Friendly Habitat members and Clarion County Master Gardeners met to "winter sow" native perennial seeds on January 6. They planted more than 80 jugs with 15 different types of flower seeds. The jugs were taken home to over winter in the volunteers' back yards. It's expected that the seeds will germinate in April and be transplanted into a community pollinator garden in June.

PA Bird Atlas 2024

By Carole Winslow



PA BIRD ATLAS

Pennsylvania has started its 3rd Birding Atlas in 2024! The Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) is the primary funder for the Pennsylvania Bird Atlas and institutional support is provided by Hawk Mountain Sanctuary. The previous two projects were breeding bird atlases, and this 3rd is a bird atlas, as winter effort will be included starting in the winter of 2024-2025. This PAB3 follows the first atlas conducted in the 80's, and the second atlas in the early 2000's. The Atlas will be a 5-year long community service project to document birds breeding in and, for the first time, wintering in Pennsylvania. The PGC has initiated this PBA3

to update the information they need to prioritize conservation and to protect the birds of Pennsylvania. A monumental contribution from volunteers is required to complete the targeted effort to do 20-plus survey hours in all of the 4,937 roughly 9 square mile blocks in the state.

Anybody can participate and anyone can bird anywhere! There is no sign up needed except starting an eBird account, just enter bird observations in eBird, accessed at the website set up, <https://ebird.org/atlaspa/home>, or by using the eBird smartphone app and selecting the Pennsylvania Bird Atlas portal. For those already submitting checklists on eBird, the good news is that you are already doing the process for reporting birds for the Atlas, and the submissions through the Atlas portal will be included in your personal eBird data.

By the time this article is printed, the Atlas website above should be complete, and on that site, you can read through the handbook, starting guides, breeding code guidelines, view maps and blocks, and also access the link to a separate page where you can sign up to cover specific blocks. Coverage for the third Atlas will be managed at the county level, I will be the coordinator for Clarion, David Yeany for Forest, Don Nixon for Jefferson, and Gary Edwards and Scott Stoleson are the NW Regional Coordinators. Clarion and Jefferson Co are both actually included in the SW Region, and those coordinators are Tom and Janet Kuehl. All the contact links are on the website as well. For those on Facebook, PA Bird Atlas has a Facebook page, and there is an excellent discussion group as well where lots of questions can be answered, and there are links to all the material needed for the atlas. Just search for the PA Bird Atlas Discussion Group and join.

If you are willing to do 20 hours of birding and 2 hours of owling effort (over 5 years if needed!) in a block, consider signing up to be the principal atlaser for that block. You might consider signing up for your home location block, or somewhere that you already bird regularly. Others can still enter data for the block, but you are primarily responsible for meeting the effort goals. The Atlas is primarily a project of reporting the most common birds, but we want to locate as many birds as possible, so if you need assistance to identify the less common species or more effort time to complete the block, you can reach out to other birders you know or contact the county coordinator for assistance. County coordinators are responsible for approving the request for block ownership.

Atlas data can already be entered, and effort is to be recorded within a designated block. Shorter duration and distance checklists are best, that can focus on specific habitat types. You can make personal location names in eBird and avoid using eBird Hotspots as they often cover multiple blocks or areas that are too large. The mobile phone app is especially helpful to use as it alerts you when you are nearing the edge of the block or have left the block that the list was started in.

We will be having a spring program that also covers the Atlas, and I will be providing some regular updates as well through the newsletter, or our SRAS website and Facebook page. I am excited about the next five years and what we will find has changed for our bird populations since the last atlas 20 years ago! I encourage everyone to think about getting involved, even if just in a small way, and I will do my best to answer questions and provide assistance. Plan to get out there this year and make your birding adventures count for citizen science!

Spring Bird Schedule

By Gary Edwards

Following is a list of approximate early dates of return for species migrating to or through the SRAS area in Spring. 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: Swamp Sparrow

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

May 1: Semipalmated Plover, Least Sandpiper,

Dunlin, Black Tern, Tennessee Warbler

May 2: Canada Warbler, Bobolink

May 4: Bay-breasted Warbler

May 5: Cape May Warbler

May 6: Virginia Rail, Sora, Acadian Flycatcher,

Semipalmated Sandpiper, Lincoln's

Sparrow

May 7: Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Black-billed

Cuckoo, Philadelphia Vireo, Blackpoll

Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Wilson's

Warbler

May 8: Black-bellied Plover, Kentucky Warbler,

Mourning Warbler

May 9: Gray-cheeked Thrush

May 11: Olive-sided Flycatcher, Willow

Flycatcher

May 14: Alder Flycatcher

SRAS Election

SRAS officers are elected for a 2-year term, or until a successor is elected. The current President, Vice-President and Treasurer have all agreed to serve a second term. The position for Secretary will be open for voting. Secretary responsibilities include being Chair of the Membership Committee, keeping records of all proceedings of the Board and Chapter, establishing a list of members-in-good-standing, and publishing and mailing biannual postcards.

If anyone is interested in the Secretary position or would like to nominate someone, please contact Vickie Gotaskie at 814-358-2214 (H) or 412-297-2904. Nominations are due by April. Elections will be held in June.

Memorial Bench for Flo

We now have a special spot for remembering Flo McGuire, long time and vital member of Seneca Rocks Audubon. With a donation to the Redbank Valley Trail Association, Seneca Rocks Audubon acquired the naming rights to a new bench along the Sligo Spur. The bench is located 1.2 miles from the RBVT parking lot at Lawsonham. Its plaque has a picture of Flo alongside the words "Enjoy the birds and nature as Flo McGuire did."



Successful Winter Bird Seed Sale

Twenty-five people participated in our winter bird seed sale and purchased 2,380 lbs. of bird seed and 32 suet blocks. Thanks to all of you who ordered and for your donations. Every dollar is appreciated! The birds surely appreciated it, also. The next bird seed sale will be announced in September.

Public Nights at Oil Region Astronomical Society

Learn about the sky and observe it through a telescope at the Oil Region Astronomy Learning Center during one of their public nights. Upcoming public nights are April 13 and May 11. A presentation from 7-8 p.m. is followed by telescope observation if the sky is clear. The Learning Center is operated by the Oil Region Astronomical Society, a group of amateur astronomers whose mission is "to educate and inspire learners of all ages about the wonders of the universe". The Learning Center is located at 4249 Camp Coffman Road, Cranberry (Venango County), PA. More information is at www.orsa.org.

"Relationships are like birds. If you hold tightly, they die. If you hold loosely, they fly. But if you hold with care, they remain with you forever."

The President's Post

By Alice Thurau

Soon the natural world will reawaken and familiar birds will return. Seneca Rocks Audubon is ready and eager to greet them with another active spring birding season.

Please join us for our bird walks and the very enjoyable "Big Sit." Bring your friends and family. You don't have to be a member. We'll be glad to see you! Birds may bring us together, but our friendships (new and old) hold us together.

We've got a variety of monthly, in-person nature programs to enjoy. In the March program, a gifted birder will inspire us to get out into the field for the third PA Bird Atlas. In April's program, you'll learn how to make your windows crash proof for birds and why that's so important. The final two programs give us pause to appreciate two national treasures – our very own Allegheny National Forest and the Bald Eagle.

We recently purchased a portable PA system so that our presenters can be easily heard no matter where you sit in the library conference room. We also purchased 6 pairs of Vortex Bantam HD 6.5x32 binoculars for youth and small adults. We'll have them handy at our outdoor events for any young participants. We also hope to put them to good use with some new youth-oriented events this year. If you have special experience in youth activities, we could use extra help!

Let us know if you have suggestions for programs, field trips, bird walks, or projects. We'd love to hear your ideas. You can email us at senecarocksaudubon@gmail.com. I hope to see you soon!

2024 Spring Nature Programs

All are invited to come to our nature programs on the second Wednesday of the month. There's no charge, you don't need to be a member, and friends and family are also welcome. Come to the lower-level conference room of the Clarion Free Library by 6:30 p.m. for the program or even earlier to socialize.

Pennsylvania Bird Atlas: Join the dark side (we have cookies!)

March 13, 2024

Everyone knows that the Pennsylvania Bird Atlas is the biggest thing happening on the PA bird scene right now. The massive citizen science project, a collaboration between the Game Commission, the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology, and Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, will inform conservation efforts in the Keystone State for years to come. But did you know that there's a dark side to atlasing? Alejandra Lewandowski will explain the numerous pitfalls to watch out for, including but not limited to: neglecting important personal responsibilities to go atlasing, developing an unhealthy obsession with checking eBird county rankings in confirmed species, getting your vehicle stuck along some remote backcountry dirt road, and forgetting how to interact with polite human society.

Of course, the safe, "normal" parts of bird atlasing- entering data in the atlas portal, understanding breeding codes, following block protocols, etc. will be explained as well. Just be aware of where it all can lead. You have been warned.

Alejandra is an avid birder with extensive atlasing experience, having worked on the third New York Breeding Bird Atlas as both a volunteer and a paid seasonal technician. The patient, close observation of birds and their breeding behaviors is her favorite type of birding. When atlasing gets a bit too intense, she decompresses by going fly-fishing- her other obsession.

Bird Window Collisions and Prevention

April 10, 2024

Did you know that an estimated one million birds die DAILY as a result of hitting windows in the U.S? That's a conservative estimate! Most of those fatal collisions occur with buildings four stories or less, like our homes.



Birds simply don't see windows as obstacles to avoid. They're fooled by reflections of trees and open skies, or by seeing what looks like favorable habitat on the other side of a transparent window.

Paulette Colantonio and Alice Tharau are members of Seneca Rocks Audubon. They'll use a PowerPoint created by the Bird-window Collision Working Group, a collaborative group in Pennsylvania, to help us understand the problem and also to realize the easy solutions that are available. There will be handouts describing a variety of window treatments, actual samples to examine, and time to discuss this all-too-common problem.



- May 8: **“The Allegheny National Forest, Then and Now”** with Jenna Morgan, Administrative Support Assistant of the ANF Visitor Center. The ANF is more than 100 years old. Jenna will share historical highlights and current concerns.

Conneaut Marsh Field Trip, 8am, Saturday, March 16, 2024

Larry Towse and Mal Hays will lead this all-day birding field trip to Conneaut Marsh at Custards, Conneaut Lake, Pymatuning Reservoir, and points in between. You can join the group for just one stop or as many stops as you like. Everyone is welcome, including families with children. Mal and Larry and our other experienced members are always happy to show others the amazing birds along the way. Besides great birding, it's a fun time with other nature lovers. Just be sure to dress for March weather and bring water and snacks.

This field trip is popular for observing numerous songbirds, lots of waterfowl and marsh birds, Bald Eagles, and even Sandhill Cranes. Conneaut Marsh is preserved as State Game Lands 213 and is designated as an Important Bird Area.

The day begins at 8 a.m. at the spillway on Conneaut Marsh at Custards to observe waterfowl, eagles, and other species. At about 9 a.m. the group will caravan to other promising birding spots. There will be a mid-morning snack and bathroom stop. Around noon we will meet in Conneaut Lake at Fireman's Beach Park on North Second Avenue off of route 322 (Water St.) There we'll have a lunch break and observe the waterfowl on the lake. You can bring a packed lunch or purchase lunch in the little town of Conneaut Lake. There are local restaurants for take-out or sit in, Subway, and Sheetz. If it's warm enough, we can picnic at Fireman's Beach Park. After Conneaut Lake, there will likely be 2 more stops. The field trip will be done around 3 pm.

Directions from Clarion to the first stop at the spillway bridge near Custards: Take I-80 west to I-79 north. Continue on I-79 north. Take Exit 141, Rt. 285 east, toward Cochran. Drive about 1 mile on Route 285 east. Turn left onto Mercer Pike (watch for a red barn on the right) and go about 1/2 mile to the parking near the bridge. An alternate route is Rt. 322 west through Franklin. Either way, the drive is about 1-1/4 to 1-1/2 hours from Clarion.

If the weather is exceptionally horrible, this outing might be postponed until March 23. Watch for a changed date on our Facebook page, website, or call Mal Hays at 814-764-5645.

Some birds you might see on the Conneaut Lake Marsh trip – all photos by Meg Kolodick:



Virginia Rail



Greater Yellowlegs



Spotted Sandpiper



Blue-Winged Teal pair

Big Sit - Saturday, May 4, 2024

By Carole Winslow

Bring your binoculars and a chair and join us for our annual spring Big Sit, a relaxing day of birding and fellowship! We will be counting all birds heard and/or seen from a central location at Carole Winslow's Maple Glen Farm near Sligo. This will be a day to hopefully see many spring migrants in a beautiful setting, while enjoying the company of other folks who love to watch and learn about birds. Indoor bathrooms, coffee, tea, water and a few light snacks are provided, feel free to bring something else to share if you like, but that is not required. Just bring your eyes, ears and enthusiasm to share! The birding starts as early as sunrise and guests are welcome to stay as long as they like into the afternoon.

Carole's address is 159 Moggey Road, Sligo. To reach the farm from Clarion, follow Rt 68 west (towards Sligo) approximately 3 miles to Reidsburg and turn left at the Zion Baptist Church onto S. Reidsburg Rd. Follow approximately 2.5 miles to Tintown and turn right at the sign for Curllsville. After approximately 1.5 miles, turn left onto Moggey Rd. Follow for one mile and the farm is on the right, marked at the end of the driveway with a carved squirrel and sign.

Birdathon

By Paulette Colantino

The Seneca Rocks Audubon will once again participate in the annual **Birdathon** the week of May 11-18, 2024. Participants, working alone or in teams, obtain pledges from sponsors that can be businesses as well as individuals. The birders record the number of species they identify by sight and/or song in a self-selected 24-hour period within the dates chosen by SRA. Trees, shrubs, grasslands, water habitats, backyards and feeders are all scrutinized. Then, birders share their species list with their sponsors, along with conversation about the birds and habitats. It is an educational experience for everyone involved. Monies collected in the Seneca Rocks bird watching competition are used for conservation and various educational programs in our surrounding area.

The Seneca Rocks Audubon chapter first participated in this national event in April 1985. The term “Birdathon” was coined in Canada in 1976 by Bird Studies Canada. The Point Reyes Bird Observatory in the Point Reyes National Seashore in California conducted the first Birdathon in the United States in 1977.

Anyone can join the fun, novice birders and experts alike. If you would like to learn more about this event, contact a member of the Seneca Rocks Audubon.

Oil Creek State Park Warbler Walk Saturday, May 18, 2024, 8:00AM

Join us for this family-friendly walk led by Mal Hays and Larry Towse to see wonderful warblers. At this time of year, warblers will be returning to our area to breed while others will be migrating through the area. Expect to be birding for about 2 – 2-1/2 hours, but you can leave earlier. All are welcome!

Meet at 8 a.m. at the Blood Farm area at Oil Creek State Park. After turning into Oil Creek State Park from Route 8, follow the park road just 1/2 mile and turn right at the entrance to the Blood Farm area. Watch for an Audubon Event sign marking the turn as it’s easily missed. There is a restroom at this area. We’ll observe birds in this area from 8-8:30AM before starting a leisurely loop walk on trails. After we’re satisfied, we’ll drive into the park for other promising birding spots. Be prepared for damp or soggy areas if it’s been a wet spring.



Black & White Warbler, Photo by Meg Kolodick

Upcoming Dates and Events

June 1-2 – **Native plant sale** by Bird-Friendly Habitat team at Herb and Fiber Festival, Cook Forest Sawmill

June 8 – **Mill Creek Walk** Watch our Summer newsletter for more information about this popular bird walk!

June 12 – Program on “**Bald Eagles**” with Alex DiCicco, State Game Warden

Cook Forest State Park Events

Saturday, February 17 at 11:00 a.m. - **Snowman in the Forest Day** featuring a chili cook-off, carriage rides, sledding snowman building, ice skating, and a snowshoe interpretive hike.

Saturday, February 24 at 7:30 a.m. - **Otter Watch**

Saturday, March 16 at 9:00 a.m. - **Polar Bear Float**

Saturday, March 30 at 8:30 a.m. - **Eagle**

For more details about these programs, go to the Cook Forest State Park website at:

<https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/stateparks/findapark/cookforeststatepark/Pages/default.aspx>



Nature: Flyways

A new special from the PBS series Nature highlights some of the spectacular migrations of bird species around the world. Look for “Nature: Flyways,” which you can stream for free on the PBS site. The program also reveals the challenges of habitat loss these long-distance flyers encounter along the way. We can help by encouraging our elected leaders to renew and enhance the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA). You can easily do that [here](#).

Surveys show declines of Baltimore Orioles in recent decades.

Photo by Cindy Bonner

Seasonal Sightings (March-May)



Northern Flicker, 04/12/2016, Photo by Meg Kolodick



Cedar Waxwing, 03/17/2020, Photo by Meg Kolodick



Hairy Woodpecker, 04/11/15, Photo by Meg Kolodick



Purple Finch, 04/11/2021, Photo by Meg Kolodick



Female and Male Goldfinches, 04/25/2014, Photos by Cindy Bonner



Pileated Woodpecker, 04/25/2014
Photo by Meg Kolodick



Robin, 03/01/2020
Photo by Meg Kolodick

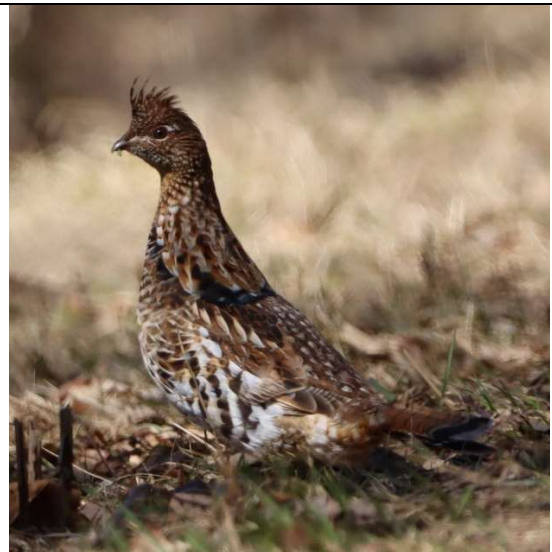


White-Breasted Nuthatch, 04/11/2023
Photo by Cindy Bonner

Nature loves granting every species a survival niche. So it is with Nuthatches. By "walking" down trees, they see insects and other food sources behind bark from ABOVE. Woodpeckers and Creepers ascending trees bottom to top see food from BELOW. Like a refrigerator with a front and back door, all three species share nutrition, but from different non-competing perspectives. Also, Nuthatches are prolific seed cachers. So when they hide food behind bark from above, it largely avoids detection from the searching ascent of clingers.



Hermit Thrush, 04/21/2013
Photo by Meg Kolodick



Pennsylvania's state bird, the Ruffed Grouse
Photo taken at Oil Creek State Park 03/20/2021
By Meg Kolodick

The Poetry Corner

Spring's Arrival

By Wayne Swanger

Warblers sing,
Their voices lift
Weathered hearts

Trees blossom laden,
Flowers make love
All around us



Song Sparrow, Photo by Meg Kolodick

Inspiration

By Wayne Swanger

Be like a song sparrow;
When it feels the need
Raises its head,
Sings without hesitation,
Never expecting a reply.

Appalachian Spring: A Morning Rhapsody

By Wayne Swanger

Night chill lingers
In dewy grayness,
World awakens
Clearing its throat
With tentative chips and calls,
Stirrings on branch, in field

Alert, I watch... listen,
A crescendo of radiance
And sound inexorably bound,
Spontaneous rhapsody
Of light and melodies

Voices swell,
Birdsong at sunrise,
A fitting encomium
To this spring morning

Dream of The Great Horned Owl

By Byron Hoot

The song of silence of the great horned owl at night
is the echo of its head moving,
the blink of its eyes. Silent is the song
it sings in flight, perched, snatching life
into death. The owl's presence is the harmony
of its song – there is nothing between
the great horned owl and its reality.
How it sees, flies, hunts in the night;
I have dreamed I've heard the echo
of its wings. Have seen it fix its eyes
on me and stared back. Saw a slight
bow but in the dream it's hard to know
if it was me to the owl, or the owl to me,
or if we bow to each other.

Listen

By Wayne Swanger

Like a warbler's
Unseen beauty
In midst of the thicket,
Your voice reveals all
To a patient listener.



Northern Parula, Photo by Meg Kolodick

*"Tame birds sing of freedom.
Wild birds fly."*

~ John Lennon ~

Bewildering Birds

Is that a Crow or a Raven?

(Information and photos from the National Audubon website)

These two species, Common Ravens and American Crows, overlap widely throughout North America, and they look quite similar.

You probably know that ravens are larger, the size of a Red-tailed Hawk. Ravens often travel in pairs, while crows are seen in larger groups. Also, watch the bird's tail as it flies overhead. The crow's tail feathers are basically the same length, so when the bird spreads its tail, it opens like a fan. Ravens, however, have longer middle feathers in their tails, so their tail appears wedge-shaped when open.

On the ground

A raven's strut is often punctuated by a few two-footed hops.

By voice

Crows give a cawing sound. But ravens produce a lower croaking sound. While crows *caw* and *purr*, ravens *croak* and *scream bloody murder*.

In flight

Ravens ride the thermals and soar, whereas crows do more flapping.

Up close

Ravens have bigger, curvier beaks relative to crows. While both species have bristles at the base of the beak, the Raven's are noticeably longer. Its throat feathers are also quite shaggy.

Location-wise

Common Ravens are much less common than American Crows in the Eastern United States. Look for ravens foraging in pairs; crows are highly sociable and will hang out in murders and communal roosts.

Check out this site for 10 fascinating facts about ravens:

<https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/53295/10-fascinating-facts-about-ravens>



Raven in flight (Ed Oakes/Audubon Photo Awards)



Crow in flight Brian Kushner



Crow's head/beak



Raven's head/beak



LEADERSHIP TEAM	
TEAM MEMBER	ROLE
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Pat Conway	Facebook & History
Gary Edwards	Outreach Programs
Mal Hays	Outings & CBC
Julia Stewart	CBC Feeder Watch
Nick Kolodick	CBC
Michael Leahy	IBA 21 Piney Tract
Jim McGuire	CBC Compiler
Ron Montgomery	Outreach Programs
Larry Towse	Outings
Jim Wilson	Nest Boxes/Feeders
Carole Winslow	PSO Clarion Co. Compiler
To contact one of the team members, send an email to their attention to senecarocksaudubon@gmail.com	

The Drummer is the newsletter of Seneca Rocks Audubon Society (SRAS).
The Drummer is available on our website in Adobe pdf
 and may be read or downloaded from the site: www.senecarocksaudubon.org.

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Fall (September-November)	August 15

Members are encouraged to contribute announcements, articles, photos, etc. to Editor, Cindy Bonner, 1000 Lincoln St., Sligo, PA 16255 or email sras@email.com.

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*Bluebirds are a sign of spring;
 warm weather and
 gentle south breezes they bring.*
 -Weather folklore



Bluebird Photo by Meg Kolodick