



THE DRUMMER

www.senecarocksaudubon.org



Volume 40-3 ~ Summer

SRAS ~ PO Box 148 ~ Clarion, PA 16214

June-August 2026

Editor, Jerry Cichocki

Hog Island Scholarship Award for 2026

Each year Seneca Rocks Audubon Society offers one fully-paid scholarship for a teacher or adult community leader from our area to attend a week-long education program at the National Audubon's Hog Island Camp in Bremen, Maine.

This year the scholarship is awarded to Dana Hannibal, Congratulations, Dana! Dana is a District Technician at Jefferson County Conservation District. JCCD manages programs that support conservation of soil, water, and related resources of the Commonwealth. Dana's duties include providing environmental education through focused programs that reach children, teens, and adults.

SRAS has registered Dana for Educators' Week of August 9 to 14. The camp will offer many ways for Dana to incorporate her Hog Island experience into educational outreach programs at JCCD.

Winners of Kids Bird Art Contest Awarded

contributed by Peggy Butler

SRAS awarded winners of the first-ever Kids Bird Art Contest, a community-wide initiative that brought together young artists and nature enthusiasts from across the region. The contest saw an overwhelming response, with over 100 submissions received through seven participating area libraries. After careful deliberation by a panel of judges, three talented students have been selected as the top overall winners in their respective age categories:

- Leigha Noelle McLaughlin, "The Northern Flicker"
- Zachary Bickish, "Baltimore Orioles and Nest"
- Josaphine Elder, "Iridescent Flight"

The initiative aimed to foster an appreciation for local avian life while providing a creative outlet for students to showcase their artistic talents. The sheer volume and quality of the entries highlight the vibrant connection between our youth and the natural world. Each of the 21 finalists was awarded a birding field guide and the 3 overall winners were additionally awarded a pair of Vortex binoculars and a pair of free passes to the National Aviary in Pittsburgh.



Bird Art Winners. Photo: Cindy Bonner/Audubon

"We were incredibly impressed by the creativity and detail found in these submissions," said Peggy Butler, SRAS Education Committee member and program coordinator. "Seeing the birds of our region through the eyes of these young artists is truly inspiring."

Donations Honoring Former SRAS Leaders

Over the past year, SRAS has had to say good-bye to three members who had been in roles of leadership for our chapter. As a symbol of our appreciation for their dedicated service, SRAS gratefully made book donations to the Clarion Free Library. Each book carries an inscription with the member's name and acknowledgement of the Chapter's appreciation. The following donations were made:

To honor Paulette Colantonio

- Nature's Best Hope by Doug Tallamy, 2020.
- The Book of Hope: A Survival Guide for Trying Times by Jane Goodall, 2021.

To honor Pete Dalby

- A Naturalist at Large: The Best Essays of Bernd Heinrich by Bernd Heinrich, 2018.
- Birding to Change the World by Trish O'Kane, 2024.

To honor Jim Wilson

- The Birdhouse Book: Building, Placing, and Maintaining Great Homes for Great Birds by Margaret Barker and Elissa Wolfson, 2021.
- Owls of the United States and Canada: A Complete Guide to Their Biology and Behavior by Wayne Lynch, 2007.

SRAS Monthly Programs March Program: "Leave No Trace"

Are you a careful birder when you venture into forests, grasslands, and marshlands to observe birds? Are you respectful of the wildlife and environment? In the featured presentation at the SRAS Program for March 2026, Peggy Butler reminded us of our responsibility to practice good birding ethics by observing the 7 "Leave No Trace" principles.

1. Know before you go. Be prepared; plan ahead; let someone know where you will be (there may be no cell coverage). Plan your route; be respectful of private property.
2. Stick to trails. Travel and camp on durable surfaces. Be especially careful in areas that may be sensitive or easily damaged, such as around lakes and streams.
3. Dispose of trash properly. Pack out what you pack in. If bathrooms/outhouses are not available, bury human waste (also pet waste) deeply, or pack it out using appropriate waste containers.
4. Leave what you find. This includes any cultural or historical artifacts; it also applies to natural objects, like plants, rocks, nests, feathers, etc.
5. Be careful with fire and lights. Use red filtered light, if possible. Any use of light should be controlled, useful, targeted, low-level, and warm.
6. Respect wildlife. Keep your distance; do not approach wildlife; observe from a distance that is safe for them as well as for you. Do not feed any animals, including birds.
7. Be mindful of others in shared spaces. Control your voice and behavior. Be considerate of other people you encounter. Do not confront - if necessary report problem behavior later upon your return.

Peggy also had a display of equipment to consider packing on trips into the Wild: maps and field guides, water container, food, rain gear, footwear, first aid kit, batteries, clean-up supplies, lighter, walking stick, binoculars, whistle, trowel.

For more information, go to the Leave No Trace website at LNT.org; also visit pafireflyevents.org.

April Program: “Nocturnal Flight Calls”

Many of us backyard birders enjoy trying to identify bird calls at home and on bird walks. Some folks, however, take it to a whole other level. The SRAS Program for April featured a presentation by Dr. Joe Gyekis. Joe uses some high-tech tools to listen-in on the chatter among migrating birds as they pass overhead during the night.

One of the software tools Joe talked about is BirdCast® from Cornell Lab (maker of the popular Merlin® app). Joe sets out a highly-sensitive microphone and recording device to capture the bird sounds throughout the night. In addition to listening to the raw recording, Joe processes it through software that produces a spectrogram, which is a way of showing the sounds visually. It provides a way of estimating how many birds were passing overhead at various times throughout the night.

As Joe said, it reveals a whole other world of bird life that is hidden from our eyes.

May Program: “Alaska Birding”

The Program for May 2026 was a presentation by Tom and Janet Kuehl on their photographic tour of the flora and fauna of the rugged coastline, expansive tundra habitat and wildlife, and summer colors of Nome and the surrounding area in June 2025.

Their tour of “Alaska Wild Side” took 5 days and covered an area that encompassed the western-most and northern-most outposts of Nome, Seward, and Barrow. That area included diverse topographies of shoreline, willow marsh, and tundra. So diverse that they were able to observe 91 bird species, plus great varieties of wildflowers and mammals that are particular to the region.

2026 Waterfowl Migration Field Trips

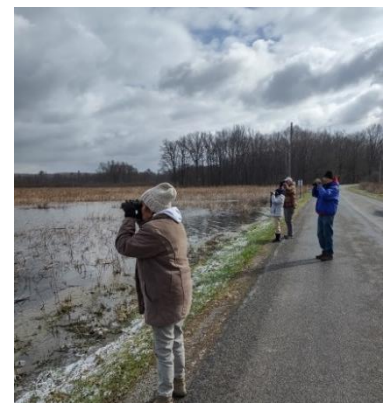
SRAS is lucky to have a number of outstanding guides to lead birding field trip. In what has become an annual event, Mal Hays, Carole Winslow, and Larry Towse led groups on consecutive Saturdays – March 21 and March 28 – to observe migrating waterfowl.

The tour followed a circuit of 8 stops around Crawford County, starting at Custards Swamp, proceeding through “The Well”, Geneva area wetlands, Conneault Lake, a few locations around Miller Ponds, and ending at Pymatuning Reservoir.

The tour groups observed the annual spring migration of many species of waterfowl on their way to breeding grounds in the North.

There were sandhill cranes, Canada geese, mergansers, and many varieties of duck. The tour group also spotted several rusty blackbirds and got a good look at a Wilson’s Snipe. In addition to the migrating waterfowl, they also sighted several bald eagles, a harrier, and kestrel.

It’s really a great trip. If you go, you will surely enjoy it. But dress warmly!



At Miller’s Ponds and Custards Swamp; Larry Towse, Mal Hays, Mary Akins, and Nancy Cichocki; Photos: Jerry Cichocki/Audubon

Christmas Bird Count 2025 Clarion County by Carole Winslow

The Clarion Christmas Bird Count was held once again on Saturday, December 20 for the 39th year. Like last year, the weather was very cold in the morning at 12 degrees, but there was no snow or rain, and little wind throughout the day. Just a bare inch of snow covered the ground, and most of the water that day was frozen except for the rivers and larger creeks.

Twenty-three folks hit the road and trails for the day and 9 others volunteered their time watching their bird feeders. There was a total number of 69.75 volunteer hours, including 4.5 hours of nocturnal birding. The total of species was lower than last year at 53, more like the average total for most years. Once again many thanks go out to Mal Hays for coordinating field routes and Cindy Bonner for getting out the info to feeder watchers and then pulling all that data together.



Image: Ifadah Amalia/vecteezy.com

Some species with numbers of note are Common Mergansers, with a good total of 5 birds found on the Clarion River. Wild Turkeys were up from last year with 102, and Great Blue Herons made the list with a single sighting. Northern Harriers were way down from last year with just 2 birds found, whereas Bald Eagles had a pretty good showing at 10. Red-shouldered Hawks were also well represented at 5, and Rough-legged Hawks at 4. A few hardy souls made it out in the early morning for owling, helping to reach a great total of 13 Eastern Screech-owls, 3 Great Horned owls and 5 total Short-eared Owls.



Peregrine Falcon, Photo: Michael Hancock/Audubon Photography Awards

A new species was added when a Peregrine Falcon was seen for the first time in the history of the count. Brown Creepers had a good day with 11, and a single Hermit Thrush was found hanging on near Sligo, hopefully making it through the bitter winter. Northern Mockingbirds are usually present in small numbers, but 6 was a good showing this year. Cedar Waxwings have been low recently and only a single bird was seen this count. Purple Finches were in low numbers, just 11 pine siskins were seen at feeders, and a single red-winged blackbird was tallied.

Like last year, several species were once again sadly absent from the count, including ruffed grouse, horned larks, and belted kingfisher. As bird populations change over the years, the Christmas bird count will hopefully continue adding to the knowledge we have of our winter species.

We are always happy to welcome additional volunteers and thereby increase the numbers of feeder watchers and/or field watchers. If interested, please email senecarocksaudubon@gmail.com. This count is a great opportunity for all of us that cherish birds to contribute our efforts to this great example of long-term citizen science, so make plans to share in the 2026 count this December !

Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Announces Northern Harrier Project

At the request of the PA Game Commission Hawk Mountain has initiated a new statewide Northern Harrier project focused on breeding harriers within the state. The team is particularly interested in any sites that have adult birds present between the May 15-July 15 safe dates. They have a team across the state surveying for active territories so we can monitor nest success and dispersal. A subset of territories will receive GPS/GSM transmitters to collect high resolution habitat use and dispersal throughout the state.

Based in Kempton, PA, Hawk Mountain is the oldest and largest member-supported raptor conservation organization in the world. They operate a scientific research center and a international conservation training facility, The wildlife sanctuary, founded in 1934, is a eco-tourism destination, and is open to the public year-round.

HARRIER HOTLINE
Hawk Mountain needs reports of northern harriers in Pennsylvania, a state listed species showing steep declines across the state.

Have you seen harriers in your field?
Look for:

- Low flying hawk with long wings
- Distinctive white rump patch
- Sightings from May- July needed
- Owl-like facial disk
- Males are pale gray above white underneath, with black wing-tips
- Females and young are warm brown
- Ground nesting in tall grass, marsh vegetation, hay or fallow fields.

REPORT HARRIER SIGHTINGS BY SCANNING THE QR CODE, OR CALL BRACKEN BROWN AT 570-943-3411 EX 103

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES
HAWK MOUNTAIN

Oilcreek Owl Box Report, March 2026

The following report was compiled by Mal Hays:

Box # 1	nothing
Box # 2	nothing
Box # 3	nothing
Box # 5	nothing
Box # 6	gray squirrel nest
Box # 8	nesting Saw-Whet owl in box
Box # 13	nothing
Box # 14	nothing
Box # 17	Cardinal feathers in box and pellets
Box # 35	nothing
Box # 36	nothing
Box # 37	nothing
Box # 38	Red squirrel nest
Box # 39	nothing
Box # 40	Blue Jay feathers in box
Box # 41	6 owl pellets in box
Box # 42	2 owl pellets in box
Box # 43	2 owl pellets in box
Box # 44	gray squirrel nest
Box # 45	nothing


The Saw-Whet Owl nesting in Box #8 was a truly remarkable event. It was visited by some nationally renowned ornithologists who confirmed that it was the first time ever that a Saw-Whet Owl is known to have nested in a human-made nest box. Congratulations to the SRAS Owl Box Project Team!



Photo by Larry Towse/Audubon

May-June Programs




NOTE: ALL 2026 PROGRAMS BEGIN AT 6:00 P.M.
For more information about each of these programs, click [here](#).

	<p>"Butterflies of Pennsylvania" with Dr. Brian Wargo 6:00 pm, June 10, Clarion Free Library Basement meeting room</p>
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More Upcoming Events

<div style="background-color: #ADD8E6; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;">May</div> <div style="background-color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black; text-align: center;">23</div>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Piney Tract Tour</u></p> <p>It's always a great SRAS tour at this 2,300 acre plot south of the Clarion River in central Clarion County, known as State Game Lands #330, also known as Piney Tract. Please meet at 9 AM on the 23rd at the game lands parking area on Mt. Zion Road. Be sure to check the website for details and get information updates.</p>
<div style="background-color: #ADD8E6; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;">May</div> <div style="background-color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black; text-align: center;">30</div>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Birds, Brews, and Ballads</u></p> <p>SRAS is co-hosting this 3-in-1 event at Cook Forest State Park: First, starting at 9:30 AM, take a guided bird walk to the fire tower. Later, enjoy handcrafted beer from Clarion River Brewing Company at MacBeth's Cabins. Finally, hear beautiful Celtic and folk music by Keridwyn at the Sawmill Theatre at Cook Forest sawmill Center for the Arts. Please click here for information.</p>
<div style="background-color: #ADD8E6; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;">June</div> <div style="background-color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black; text-align: center;">6</div>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cook Forest Warbler Walk</u></p> <p>Enjoy an outing to one the best migrating warbler traps in Western Pennsylvania, Cook Forest State Park. Meet at the Log Cabin Interpretive Center which is off of Forest Drive, Cooksburg, PA – at 9 AM. Watch SRAS web page for updates on this event. SRAS will co-host this event with Cook Forest Conservancy</p>
<div style="background-color: #ADD8E6; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;">June</div> <div style="background-color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black; text-align: center;">6 - 7</div>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Native Plant Sale</u></p> <p>SRAS will have scores of potted plants for sale again this year at the Herb & Fiber Festival at Cook Forest Sawmill Center for the Arts.</p> <p>Many vendors will be selling hanging baskets, bedding flats, perennials, annuals, garden artists and herbs at this annual event that has been held at the Sawmill Center for over 40 years.</p>
<div style="background-color: #ADD8E6; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;">June</div> <div style="background-color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black; text-align: center;">15</div>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Brookville Laurel Festival</u></p> <p>SRAS will have a table on Outdoor Night 5-9 PM at the festival. Visit our table for great information and kids' activities. Volunteers are needed. More information here.</p>



<p style="text-align: center;">June 20</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Birds & Coffee: Bird Walk in Brockway</u></p> <p>Join us for some bird-watching at the Clarion-Little Toby Rail Trailhead in 7th Avenue at 9 AM Saturday, June 20. Anyone, any age, is welcome. Bring binoculars. Refreshments and socializing to follow at Sunrise Coffee! Click here for more information.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">June 26 - 27</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>PA Firefly Festival</u></p> <p>SRAS will have a table from noon to 6 PM each day at the Market Village in Tionesta. Volunteers are needed. More information here.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">June 27</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Rain Garden Workshop</u></p> <p>Clarion County Conservation District will conduct a workshop titled The Power of Plants: Rain Gardens & Riparian Buffers at the District office: 249 S 2nd Ave, Clarion. SRAS will deliver a presentation on native plants and birds.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">July 11</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Native Plant Garden Tour</u></p> <p>Visit public and private gardens in the greater Clarion area on this free self-guided tour organized by SRAS Bird-Friendly Habitat Committee.</p> <p>A map of gardens on the tour will be available at Janice Horn Memorial Garden in 2nd Ave Park, Clarion. Tour as many of the locations as you like.</p> <p>C&A Trees will be a stop on the tour. They will offer 20% off native plants. Pop-up food and drink also available for purchase at C&A Trees from 11 AM to 2 PM, provided by County Seat Restaurant.</p> <p>Watch for details.</p> <div style="float: right; border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p style="color: green; font-weight: bold;">Attention Native Plant Gardeners!</p> <p style="color: orange; font-weight: bold;">Seneca Rocks Audubon Society</p>  <p style="font-size: small;">announces its</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: orange;">1st Annual Native Plant Garden Self-Guided Tour</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: orange;">July 11, 2026 from 9 AM to 1 PM.</p> <p style="font-size: x-small; color: #808080;"><i>If you have created a bird- and pollinator-friendly space in your garden, and you live in Clarion or the surrounding area, we would love to have you showcase it by being a stop on our tour.</i></p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">For information or to have your garden on the tour, contact -- senecarocksaudubon@gmail.com</p>   </div>
<p style="text-align: center;">July 18</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>EnviroBash</u></p> <p>SRAS will have a table celebrating the Izaak Walton League at Waltonian Park in Oil City from 11:30 AM to 7:00 PM. Volunteers are needed. More info here.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">August 12</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Members Picnic</u></p> <p>Our annual picnic will be at Clarion County Park, 5 PM to 8 PM on August 12.</p>

August

~17

Common Nighthawk Migration Count

Join in on this *citizen science* opportunity. Counts are taken at 2 locations: Oil City Marina and Millcreek Boat Launch on the Clarion River. Counts start around August 17 and end the second week in September. Email senecarocksaudubon@gmail.com.

Is Your Yard Bird-Friendly?

If your yard has native plants, food, water, and places to shelter and nest, you might qualify for the new Bird Habitat Recognition program. It's a statewide program relaunched by the Pennsylvania Audubon Council. Seneca Rocks Audubon is one of the many PA Audubon chapters that are participating.

We encourage the creation of bird-friendly habitats wherever possible -- in yards, businesses, schools, state parks, and places of worship. Each place can help a migrating bird rest and refuel to complete its journey; or provide a bird with resources to stay and raise a family.

The program application is online and easy to complete. The \$30 cost includes an attractive aluminum yard sign to celebrate and spread the word, an automatic one-year membership for Seneca Rocks Audubon to those within our three counties, and a free subscription to Bird Town Pennsylvania's newsletter, "Bird Beat." Click [here](#) for the application. The application is also available on the [Bird-Friendly Habitat](#) page of our website.

Bird-Friendly Habitat



The Pennsylvania Audubon Council recognizes that this property provides a healthy wildlife habitat that supports and protects birds, people, and the places we share.



paauduboncouncil.org
birdtownpa.org
senecarocksaudubon.org



Here are some of the first in our chapter area to receive their new Bird-Friendly Habitat signs. We'd love to see a photo of you with your sign in the next newsletter! *(Photos by Alice Thurau/Audubon.)*



Heather Ulianna, Sigel



Kelleville Firefly Farm & Sanctuary



Alice Thurau, Limestone Twp

Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania Native Plant Nursery is OPEN for the Season

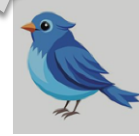
Hours:

Tuesday – Sunday, 9 am to 5 pm
(closed on all major holidays)

Hey,
Look!



Sweet!



Location:

Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve
614 Dorseyville Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15238

More information is on their [website](#)



The Festival features an incredible schedule of field trips, presentations, vendors, and chances to socialize. Scheduled during the height of nesting season, field trips will include observing nesting behaviors and contributing to the Pennsylvania Bird Atlas. The Saturday evening banquet will include a keynote from Ross and Melissa Gallardy on a record-breaking Pennsylvania big year.

Click [here](#) to register. The deadline to register for the banquet is June 9 and the deadline for all registrations is June 14.

Avian Influenza in Wild Birds

According to the Pennsylvania Game Commission [website](#), bird flu viruses have circulated among wild birds throughout the winter, and "strains of highly pathogenic avian influenza viruses" continue to be a threat as migration unfolds.

Raptors, such as hawks and eagles, as well as other avian scavengers, like crows and ravens, can be impacted by feeding on infected birds.

The Game Commission asks the public to report any wild birds observed sick or found dead. They advise that "Birds infected with highly pathogenic avian influenza can exhibit neurologic signs, such as swimming or walking in circles, tilting their heads in an unnatural position, trembling, seizing or having difficulty flying." Reports can be phoned in to 800-PGC-WILD.

Seasonal Sightings (June-August)

Birds, Flora & Fauna



Photos clockwise from top left: Vulture on monument at Sligo Cemetery, Coneflowers, Deer – spike in velvet, Rabbit, Primrose. All photos by Cindy Bonner/Audubon

The Poetry Corner

All poems are from Beak Bone & Feather.
You can purchase the book at any of our events or programs or on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com).

Persuasion

by

Paulette Colantonio

Wood pewee, old friend
Your plaintive song in the awakening woods
 accompanied by the sun, now washing the green
canopy.

Muted shadows dance below, and your melody
continues...

I, too, must continue upon the path,
 But you invite me to linger

And

So

I

Shall.

Bewildering Birds

The Golden Guys

These male warblers have similarly bright backsides

(content, including photos, are from an article in **Birds & Blooms** by Rachel Maidl)



Yellow-rumped warbler

Yellow-rumped warblers are seen coast to coast. They breed in the North and in the mountains of the West and spend winter in the South. Magnolia warblers breed in the Northeast and migrate through the East to spend winter in the tropics.



Magnolia warbler

The Yellow-rumped has a spot at the top of its tail. Its belly is white with black markings and yellow on the sides. The eyes are mostly black with white eye spots. It has a broad white stripe on the outer tail feathers. The eastern variety has a white throat, whereas those in the West have yellow.

The Magnolia warbler also has a yellow rump, but its belly is yellow with black necklace and streaks. Its face is black with prominent white eyebrow streaks. On outer feathers of the tail is a big square white patch. Its throat is vivid yellow.

PA House Bill 2316 – Designating the Scarlet Tanager as PA State Migratory Bird



Photo: Travis Bonovsly/Audubon Photography Awards

The Scarlet Tanager is a striking songbird, so vividly colored it seems almost too exotic for northeastern forests. Despite their vivid colors, they are notoriously difficult to see because they spend most of their time foraging high in the leafy canopies of mature deciduous forests.

Pennsylvania is home to 13% of the Tanager's global breeding population. They arrive in the spring and are seen throughout the Commonwealth in summer.

The Tanager lives in mature hardwood forest, and can be seen as an indicator of forest health: Where they thrive, forests are resilient; where they decline, it signals ecological stress.

Bill sponsor Rep. Mandy Steele stated "Healthy forests that this bird depends on play vital roles in the state's outdoor recreation economy and forestry industries. Highlighting this species is a chance to celebrate our natural heritage while inspiring the next generation to protect it."

Please call, email, or write your state representative now and ask them to **co-sponsor PA House Bill 2316**. Find more information about the Scarlet Tanager and this important bill [here](#).

Nest Failures

(from an [article](#) by Cornell Lab of Ornithology)

Nests can fail for a variety of reasons – typically, environmental conditions, chemicals, predators, and limits on food availability.

Weather can be a cause of failure. Though most nest boxes have adequate insulation and ventilation, they may meet their limits during extreme weather. Adverse weather may also reduce insect populations that birds rely on as a food source.

Use of chemicals such as pesticides and insecticides, may impact the food source. Birds may ingest insects coated with chemicals; spraying herbicides will often contaminate anything that touches that sprayed area.

Loss of one parent during the nesting stage is another potential cause of nest failure.

Though the other parent can sometimes make up for the loss by increasing their feeding rate, it's also possible they may abandon the nest and start over.

There are many animals that predate bird nests, including raccoons, cats, chipmunks and some other rodents, snakes, and even other birds. For example, House Sparrows and European Starlings are non-native in North America and may kill nestlings and occasionally an adult bird.

On rare occasions, severe parasite infestations can render the young so weak they cannot survive. However, just because you find mites in the nest, doesn't mean a severe infestation is inevitable.

Unfortunately, many birds' nests are unsuccessful in the wild, and even when monitors do everything possible to help increase those chances, there are still some things beyond our control. Rest assured this is one of the reasons why birds lay so many eggs and have multiple broods per year.



Photo: 1Eastern Bluebird, juvenile, Photo :Jessica Nelson/Audubon Photography Awards

How Long Do Hummingbirds Live?

(from an article in *Birds & Blooms* by Emily Hannemann)

Based on banding studies, 7 or 8 years is a ripe old age for most hummingbirds in the wild. Dr. Kevin McGowan, senior course developer for the Cornell Lab of Ornithology Bird Academy, agrees that hummingbirds—like many smaller songbirds—aren't long-lived. "Especially small birds, they tend to be readily eaten," he says. "That's a problem. So generally, with hummingbirds or sparrows or chickadees, you can expect the maximum to be around ten years. If they make it to ten years, that's really good."

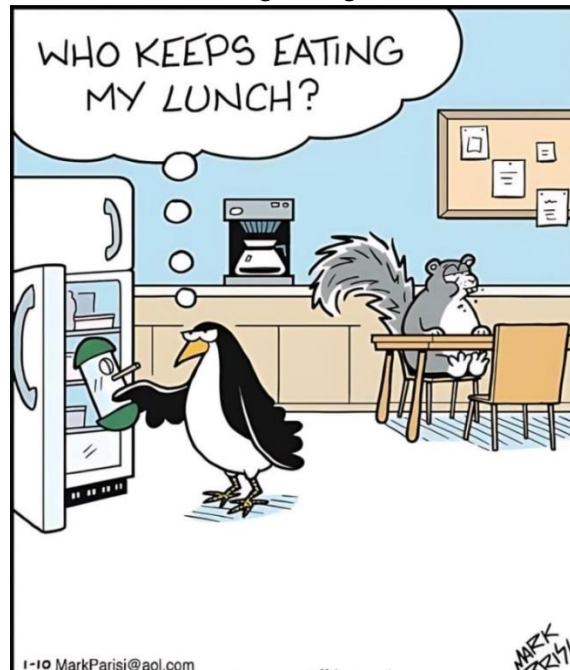


Anna's Hummingbird (immature), Photo: Mick Thompson/Audubon

Most species of hummingbirds breed when they're around 1 year old. For juvenile hummingbirds, leaving the nest for the first time means constantly searching for nectar. They need more food, more frequently than most birds, so food availability is one of the biggest factors affecting how long hummingbirds live.

It might be difficult to believe given their tiny size, but some birds and other backyard predators do eat hummingbirds. Sharp-shinned hawks, Mexican jays, spiders, and praying mantises will all kill hummingbirds, if they're able to catch them. Outdoor cats, of course, are one of the biggest risks to hummingbirds' longevity.

Just For Fun



To see more from this comic, check out [Off the Mark](#) (by Mark Parisi).



LEADERSHIP TEAM	
TEAM MEMBER	ROLE
Alice Thureau	President, Webmaster & Bird-Friendly Habitat (BFH)
Vickie Gotaskie	Vice-President, BFH
Cindy Bonner	Treasurer, Drummer Editor & CBC Feeder Watch
Kay John	Secretary, Membership & Conservation/Advocacy
Peggy Butler	Education
Nancy Cichocki	BFH, Interim Member at Large
Pat Conway	Facebook & History
Gary Edwards	Outreach Programs
Mal Hays	Outings & CBC
Nick Kolodick	Outings & CBC
Michael Leahy	IBA 21 Piney Tract
Jim McGuire	Education
Ron Montgomery	Outreach Programs
Larry Towse	Outings
Carole Winslow	CBC Compiler, PA Bird Atlas
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.

The Drummer is published 4 times per year

	<u>Submission Deadlines</u>
Vol. 1 Winter (December-February)	November 15
Vol. 2 Spring (March-May)	February 15
Vol. 3 Summer (June-August)	May 15
Vol. 4 Fall (September-November)	August 15

Members are encouraged to contribute announcements, articles, photos, etc. to Editor, Jerry Cichocki, or email attention Editor: SRAS.

Become a Volunteer for SRAS: <https://www.senecarocksaudubon.org/volunteer>

Like us on Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/SenecaRocksAudubon>