



THE DRUMMER

www.senecarocksaudubon.org



Volume 39 ~ Winter

December 2022-February 2023

SRAS ~ PO Box 148 ~ Clarion, PA 16214

Editor, Cindy Bonner

In Memory of Flo McGuire (1947-2022)

By Deb Freed

As our Drummer editor for twenty years, Flo McGuire masterfully arranged the articles and announcements enhancing the pages with artwork, photographs, and inspiring quotes. As Webmaster, Flo used her creative talents to produce an attractive, informative and interesting place for members and visitors to learn about Seneca Rocks Audubon. She archived the Drummer on the website providing a wonderful historical accounting of our chapter.

Beyond Flo's commitment to the chapter in print and on-line, she was an unassuming presence at meetings, field trips and events. She often shared home baked goodies with fellow birders, always recorded the species list and contributed to numerous programs through her birding contacts.

Our chapter is better and relevant because Flo and Jim chose to volunteer and give of themselves so generously. We miss Flo and are grateful that Jim continues to be part of our birding community.



SRAS Officers: Past and Present

2022 brought changes to the SRAS officers as we said a heartfelt thanks to Deb Freed, President, for her 22 years of service and to Janice Horn, Treasurer, for her 21 years of service.



A Fond Farewell

by Pat Conway

Seneca Rocks Audubon bids a fond farewell to our president, Deb Freed. Deb and husband Ben are downsizing and moving to the Pittsburgh area to be closer to family.

Deb has been the president of Seneca Rocks Audubon for the past twenty-two years. Her leadership and dedication to Seneca Rocks has been exemplary.

At the October meeting, we presented Deb with a token of appreciation, a carving of a Brown Creeper, one of Deb's favorite birds.

We will miss Deb, but wish her and Ben the very best as they start the next chapter of their lives.

Wings up, Deb!

Wings up!

Thanks to Janice

by Alice Thureau

Janice Horn stepped down as SRAS Treasurer in July after quietly and diligently serving in that capacity for twenty-one years. Dedicated, competent, responsible, reasonable, pleasant, diplomatic, generous, and wise are just some of the qualities that come to mind from my interactions with Janice. I hope that Janice will feel welcome and valued as a leader and member of Seneca Rocks for many more years.

Thank you for your service, Janice!



Current SRAS Officers

President, Alice Thureau: I live in an 1860's house on a 40-acre farm, where we're working to improve the habitat for birds. I've always been in love with nature and the outdoors. I used to be a long-distance runner and clinical dietitian. Now I'm happy to walk, hike, bike, garden, and bird.

Vickie Gotaskie, Vice-President: I was born in WV, lived most of my adult life in Pittsburgh, and moved to Callensburg when I retired. I enjoy being outdoors and learning about all aspects of nature. Other interests include kayaking, camping, organic gardening, holistic medicine, Native American culture, and reading.

Cindy Bonner, Treasurer: I graduated Summa Cum Laude from Clarion University as a returning adult student with an AS degree in Business with a concentration in Computers. I worked with computers and in accounting all my career and retired from the Finance Department of Clarion Industries at the end of 2013. My husband and I live in Sligo with our two dogs. Reading, crocheting and photography are my hobbies. I enjoy watching the birds at my feeder and the wildflower walks of SRAS.

Kay John, Secretary: My undergraduate teaching degree was from Clarion College and I received my Master of Education degree from the University of Pittsburgh. I retired from both the public and state school systems having taught over 30 years in classrooms ranging from kindergarten through college classes. I enjoy finding new and interesting plants/trees that help attract more birds and native bees into my yard. As a Penn State Master Gardener, I am presently part of the Penn State Bee Project, collecting and pinning samples of native bee populations in Clarion County.

Road to Recovery: Continental Conservation of the Evening Grosbeak with David Yeany II

In September, David Yeany, Avian Ecologist for the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program at the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, presented his program on the efforts to conserve the Evening Grosbeak. Their population has seen a 92% decline since 1970. Satellite tracking tags and banding are part of the efforts to track Evening Grosbeaks.



Female

If you sight an Evening Grosbeak with a band or satellite tracking tag, please contact:

dyeany@paconserve.org.
Include the date, time and where sighted, coordinates if possible. Photos would also be welcome.



Male

Fall Bird Seed Sale

The fall bird seed sale was a success! We sold 4,130 pounds of bird seed and 96 blocks of suet!



Thanks to all of you who ordered bird seed and even made a donation. It's a major fundraiser for Seneca Rocks Audubon, helping to pay for expenses such as insurance, programming, website, and equipment.

We'll have another bird seed sale in February. Watch for it by email, website, and Facebook.



2022 Clarion County Common Nighthawk Migration Count

By Mal Hays

This was our sixth annual count at the Mill Creek boat launch on the Clarion River. We started our migration counts in 2017 and have conducted them every year since.

This year we started our count on August 14th, and ended on September 7th, counting each night. Our total count for 2022 was 672 Nighthawks, our second highest year, second only to 2018 when we had a total of 710 birds. It was nice to see our count at 672 this year as 2020 and 2021 had been our two lowest year totals at 394 and last year our lowest at 329.

We start each evening two hours before sunset and count till dark, breaking it down into four 30-minute quarters. This year our first quarter had 75 birds (11%), second quarter 200 birds (30%), third quarter 360 birds (54%), fourth quarter 37 birds (4%).

We had 26 different people participate as watchers this year, our highest number in our six years. We had six watchers who participated for the first time this year. Having more people participating makes for a more enjoyable watch, the more eyes the better, and makes for a more fun evening

Thank you to everyone who participated this year, looking forward to 2023, come join us!



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/pauljhurtado/15158480565>

From Gary Edwards: In Venango County, the Migration Count is at the Oil City Marina to capture activity along the Allegheny River. This took place from August 13 through September 8, 27 days, and the high total of 77 was on September 4.

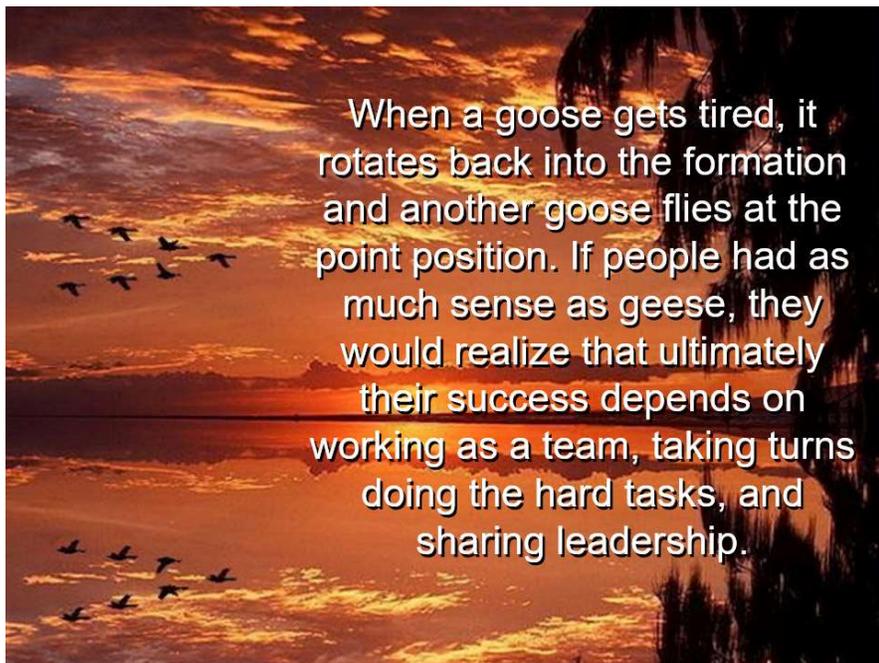
Call for Volunteers and Ideas

We value all of our members, no matter how actively engaged. Like any group, we're strengthened by member involvement. If you'd like to become more involved or have an idea that would benefit our chapter, please let one of us know.

Here are a few volunteer opportunities that could use help:

- Press releases
- Owl box monitoring
- Christmas bird count
- Nature program coordination
- Advocacy
- Bird walks
- Website
- Bird-friendly habitat tabling events
- Event planning

Share your idea or offer to help with any officer or leader at a meeting, or email us at senecarocksaudubon@gmail.com, althurau@gmail.com (Alice) or mrl706@gmail.com (Michael Leahy).



This is a slide from a PowerPoint presentation that I found about geese in 2006. It states that the author is unknown, but the ending slide suggests sharing it with others.

Join the SRAS team!

Amazon Smile Program

Now there is another way that you can support SRAS, and it's painless! When you shop at Amazon, be sure to use <https://smile.amazon.com> and select Seneca Rocks Audubon Society as your charity. Amazon will donate .5% of your purchases every quarter to SRAS. Encourage your friends and neighbors to do the same. It adds up and every little bit helps!



Christmas Bird Count

From Audubon Society CBC page

Prior to the turn of the 20th century, hunters engaged in a holiday tradition known as the Christmas "Side Hunt." They would choose sides and go afield with their guns – whoever brought in the biggest pile of feathered (and furred) quarry won.

Conservation was in its beginning stages in that era, and many observers and scientists were becoming concerned about declining bird populations. Beginning on Christmas Day 1900, ornithologist Frank M. Chapman, an early officer in the then-nascent Audubon Society, proposed a new holiday tradition – a "Christmas Bird Census" that would count birds during the holidays rather than hunt them. So began the Christmas Bird Count!

SRAS Christmas Bird Count

The SRAS Christmas Bird Count will be held on December 17, 2022 and the tally luncheon will take place on December 21, 2022.

If you would like to participate in one of the routes or as a feeder watcher, please send an email to senecarocksaudubon@gmail.com and we will get back to you with more information.

Route Counters

By Mal Hays

The Seneca Rocks CBC circle consists of 8 sections. Each section has a leader. The leader is in charge of recruiting people to help in their section, mapping out a route for the day of the count, and doing some scouting in their area before the day of the count. My team for example consists of Ron Montgomery, Larry Towse and Vicki Gotaskie. Ron and Larry go out together early morning and I go out early morning around 5 am looking for owls. We all meet up with Vickie at 8am and continue the

remainder of the day together. The section leader coordinates with his team how they will cover the section and the time frames. The section leaders are section A - Mal Hays, section B – Carole Winslow, section C – Pete Dalby, section D – Pat Conway, section E – Jim McGuire, section F – Janice Horn, section G – Mike Leahy, section H – Gary Edwards.

NOTE: A map of these sections is available here: <https://www.senecarocksaudubon.org/christmas-bird-count>.

Feeder Watchers

By Danette Karls

Feeder Watchers must be located within one of the 8 sections (see map). It's easy to do – you use a form to count the highest number of each species at your feeder during the 24-hour period on December 17th. For example, if you are counting Chickadees, keep track of the number at the feeder each time you check. Then report the one time during the day that had the highest number of Chickadees. Let's say you check your feeders six times during the day with counts of 6, 8, 1, 7, 9, and 5. You would the report 9 Chickadees on the form.

In 2021, we had 13 watchers and 1 team, 26-1/4 hours spent watching, 31 species, and 393 birds.

It's a fun way to help with the CBC, stay warm, and maybe even see a different bird at your feeder!



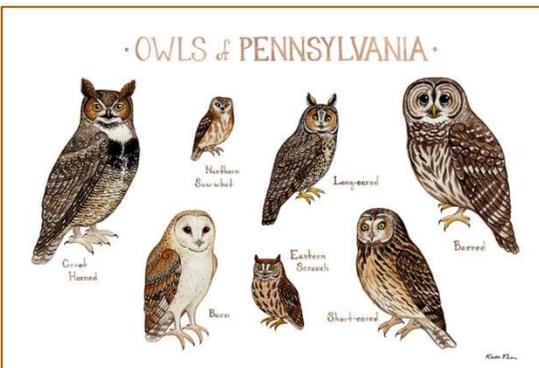
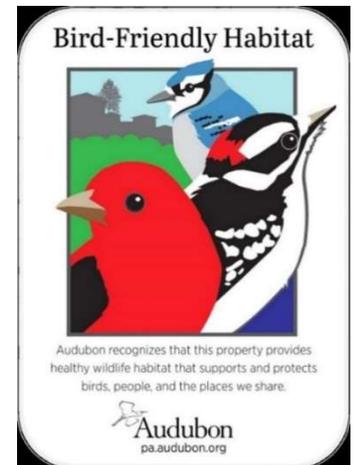
Carolina Wren ~ Photo by Cindy Bonner

Bird-Friendly Habitat

The Bird-Friendly Habitat team has had a fun and busy year educating the public about the role of native plants in supporting birds. In 2022, we've had 7 tabling events with informational handouts, 3 presentations to community groups, 1 impromptu plant sale, 1 garden tour, and 1 Native Plant Month Proclamation by the mayor of Clarion.

Our team is always looking for additional native plant enthusiasts to join us. Let Alice know if you'd like to be included. Her email is althurau@gmail.com.

If you're interested in building your own backyard bird-friendly habitat, be sure to check out the useful information on our Seneca Rocks Audubon website. Look under "Projects" for the Bird-Friendly Habitat page. Every yard can make a difference!



Owl Prowl

Due to the weather, the Owl Prowl scheduled for November 16 or 17, 2022 had to be cancelled.

We have 2 new features for the newsletters: **Seasonal Sightings** and **The Poetry Corner**. Each newsletter we encourage members to submit photos from the prior three months for Seasonal Sightings. Please include a description, date taken, location and photographer's name. For The Poetry Corner, members are also encouraged to submit poems.

Seasonal Sightings



Brown Thrasher, Seneca, 9/22/22 ~ Photo by Meg Kolodick



Osprey, 8/8/22 on limb below Eagle's nest on
Canoe Ripple Road ~
Photo by Cindy Bonner



Witch Hazel Tree, 10/22/22, Clarion ~
Photo by Deb Freed

Great-horned
Owlets, in a nest
at a Great Blue
Heron rookery on
Rte. 8, 4/7/22 ~
Photo by Meg
Kolodick



Bluebird on
feeder hook,
10/27/22 ~
Photo by
Cindy
Bonner

I was excited because I never had a Bluebird at my feeder before... but he hasn't been back since!



Black & White Warbler, Seneca, 9/16/22 ~
Photo by Meg Kolodick

The Poetry Corner

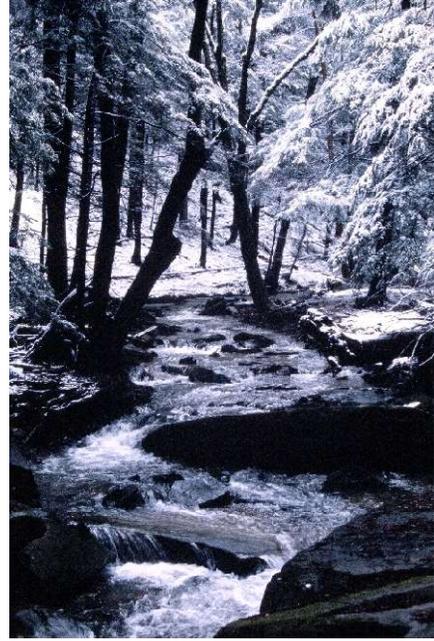
The Storm

From Winter Revelations

By Patricia Thrushart

First published in The Watershed Journal

The Forest waits.
Fallen snow is girded in ice,
 ready.
The world is silent in its held
 breath.
Clouds hang low,
gray and swollen.
The littlest sparrow
is fluffed and still,
the tall owl has found its shelter
 barely visible
 in a hollow tree.



From Winter Walks (iii)

By Patricia Thrushart

The stillest of nights is baffled in snow
so thick the trees bow
as if the moment is holy,
and you stand stock-still
in muffled wonder,
your ears straining for
a reminder that you are not alone—
the scream of an owl,
grunt of a deer,
a distant barking dog.

All you hear is
blood rushing in your ears,
breath caught in your throat,
the press of piled snow
dampening the entire world,
so that what is in you
is all that's left.



Patricia Thrushart writes poetry and historical nonfiction. Her fourth and latest book of poems, *Inspired By Their Voices: Poems from Underground Railroad Testimonies*, was put out by Mammoth Books. Her poems have been published in multiple local and national journals. Her narrative nonfiction book, *Cursed: The Life and Tragic Death of Marion Alsobrook Stahlman*, was published in December 2021 by Adelaide Books.

Winter photos on this page are by Cindy Bonner.

UPCOMING EVENTS	
December 14	Member's Night and Get Ready to Count for CBC
December 17	36th Christmas Bird Count (CBC)
December 21	Christmas Bird Count Tally
February 2023	Spring Birdseed Sale
February 17-20	Great Backyard Bird Count
WATCH THE SRAS WEBSITE FOR SPRING PROGRAMS	

Question for the Spring Issue
What is your favorite bird and Why? No need to wait until February 15th - send your responses now to Cindy Bonner, stras@email.com. Photos are welcome, too.

Note: The email address is not a typo – it is really @email, not gmail!

LEADERSHIP TEAM	
TEAM MEMBER	ROLE
Alice Thurau	President, Webmaster & Bird-Friendly Habitat
Vickie Gotaskie	Vice-President
Cindy Bonner	Treasurer & Editor
Kay John	Secretary & Membership
Paulette Colantonio	Education
Pat Conway	Facebook & History
Gary Edwards	Outreach Programs
Mal Hays	Outings & CBC
Danette Karls	CBC Feeder Watch
Nick Kolodick	CBC
Michael Leahy	IBA 21 Piney Tract
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), PO Box 148, Clarion, PA 16214. SRAS is a chapter of the National Audubon Society. The Drummer is published 4 times per year: Winter (Dec-Feb), Spring (Mar-May), Summer (Jun-Aug) and Fall (Sep-Nov).

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, Cindy Bonner, 1000 Lincoln St., Sligo, PA 16255 or email stras@email.com.

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