



# The Fledgling

Newsletter of the Southern Adirondack Audubon Society  
[www.audubon.noncommercial.org](http://www.audubon.noncommercial.org)

Vol. 26 No. 2

Dec 2008 – Jan 2009

## President's Message

The weather has suddenly turned very cold, and we are reminded that winter is almost here. Happy holidays to everyone.

My wife and I were fortunate to vacation in Hawaii this fall, and we enjoyed the weather, beaches, flora, and fauna. We saw green sea turtles sleeping on the beach and wonderful new birds, including the Hawaiian Stilt, the Apapane, Great Frigatebirds, Wedge-tailed Shearwaters, White-tailed Tropicbirds, Red-footed Boobies, and the endangered Nene Goose. We visited five botanical gardens and spent hours photographing the exotic and fragrant flowers. We were amazed at the lush vegetation and stunning variety of tropical plants and flowers that grace the islands.

We did observe some problems there, however. Many species of animals and plants introduced to the islands have adversely affected the habitats they invade, both economically and environmentally. Wild chickens and roosters are everywhere in Kauai; an estimated 450,000 of them! The Polynesians and Europeans introduced them, and after Hurricane Iniki in 1992, they scattered. Because there are no natural predators on Kauai, they have flourished. On the other islands mongooses keep them in check. They crow all day and throughout the night. In addition to being a general nuisance, other concerns include lice, the potential of bird flu, and illegal cockfighting. It is illegal to kill them.

Wild pigs are a serious concern. The Polynesians also introduced them several hundred years ago. They eat massive amounts of vegetation, causing native plant extinction and soil erosion, and are a serious threat to the native bird habitat and the rainforest. They are hunted and snared, and barrier fences are erected to contain them in game management areas. Black rats were introduced unintentionally to the islands from the ships of the early settlers. The mongooses were

**SAAS Calendar**

**All monthly public program meetings will be held at the Moreau Community Center  
144 Main St., So. Glens Falls, NY**

<b>DEC</b>	<b>No Meeting "Happy Holidays to All"</b>
<b>Jan 28 7pm</b>	<b>"Photographing Wild Birds" with Gordie Ellmers</b>
<b>Feb 25 7pm</b>	<b>"Short-eared Owls of the Fort Edward Grasslands Important Bird Area" with Don Polunci</b>

then brought in to control the rats. The plan was ill advised, because the rats are nocturnal and the mongoose is diurnal, so they never posed a threat to the rats. The rats and mongooses preyed upon the eggs and hatchlings of birds, including the Hawaiian goose. Both rats and mongooses carry the bacteria leptospirosis, which their droppings transfer to streams and water supplies, causing serious health problems.

The coqui frog was introduced in 1988 from Puerto Rico in some plant material, and its cry is loud. In Puerto Rico, it is kept in check by snakes, but there are no snakes in Hawaii, and there are no other natural enemies. A chorus of several frogs is deafening; it's been measured at 163 decibels, the equivalent to the noise level of a jet engine at 100 feet. (Our hotel provided earplugs!) Controlling measures include trapping them, and spraying them with citric acid or highly concentrated caffeine.

*con't. on page 7*

## Membership News



On October 19, several SAAS officers and board members attended an open house honoring our former Membership Chair, Claire Hunter. Members of The Historical Society of Moreau and South Glens Falls, an organization in which Claire was active for many years, arranged for a flagpole to be erected at the Parks-Bentley House, accompanied by a plaque honoring her service. The SAAS board was investigating ways to honor Claire as well, and voted to support this worthwhile project. Audubon New York supplied a certificate honoring Claire for her service to Audubon, and our President, Don Polunci, presented it to her that day. The music, military presentation of colors, and delicious refreshments were enjoyed by all who attended.

**CONGRATULATIONS, CLAIRE!**

Board member, Pat Fitzgerald, will take over the duties of Membership Chair. Any questions about your membership may be directed to her by phone at 518-792-6846, or by email to [pfitz\\_007@yahoo.com](mailto:pfitz_007@yahoo.com)



## **GET INVOLVED IN CITIZEN SCIENCE! It's for the birds!**

There are many opportunities for SAAS members and their birding friends to participate in avian research. The studies are known as "citizen science" projects because non-professionals can help gather data on birds in their home area, submit results to central locations. Professional ornithologists will then study the results to learn more about the birds and their habits.



### **2008 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT** **December 14, 2008**

Each year SAAS members brave the weather to participate in this longest-running wildlife census. All the birds within a 15-mile-diameter circle, centered in Hudson Falls, are counted. There are many diverse habitats, making for an interesting day. Board member Linda White is the compiler for this count. If you would like to help with this important project, please contact her at 792-4446.

### **Project FeederWatch** **In Progress**

Although Project FeederWatch officially began on Saturday, November 8, you can sign up anytime. Participants keep track of the birds that use their feeders and report them to Cornell Lab of Ornithology each week. Visit their website to learn more:

[www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw)

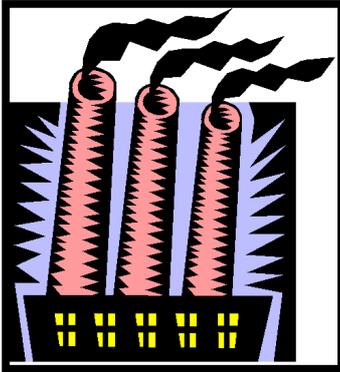
### **The Great Backyard Bird Count** **February 13-16, 2009**

The GBBC will be held Feb 13-16, 2009. This is a joint project of National Audubon and Cornell Lab of Ornithology and provides an annual real-time "snapshot" of winter bird distribution across North America. In 2008, a record 85,000 checklists were submitted identifying 635 species! Data submitted give valuable insight into range expansion of species, irruption of northern owls and finches, movement of early migrating species, and the expansion of alien exotic species.

Counting birds for as little as 15 minutes on one or more of the count days, will add valuable data to this huge continent-wide effort. For more information:

[www.birdsorce.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsorce.org/gbbc)

## Ten States Unwilling to Wait: The Nation's First Multi-State Cap-and-Trade System to fight Global Warming



In September of 2008, New York partnered with nine other states in the Northeast to initiate the nation's first ever multi-state cap-and-trade program for carbon emissions. The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) places a limit on the amount of carbon dioxide emissions from the power sector and gradually reduces that limit by 10% by 2018. Power companies buy carbon allowances at auction and must have enough of the allowances to cover their emissions. If the company emits less pollution than it has credits for, it can sell the allowances to others who need extra. By placing an ultimate cap on the total emissions, and gradually reducing that cap, the environment will benefit from the reduced pollution. Another advantage is that the money raised by auctioning off the initial allowances will be invested into energy efficiency programs and other programs that benefit the consumer.

RGGI is the first ever multi-state cap-and-trade program, and other states are researching setting up similar systems to combat global warming. Although ideally cap-and-trade would be a nationwide program, many states and communities are no longer willing to wait until Washington launches such a program.

-Jason Goldsmith

### About Fair Trade

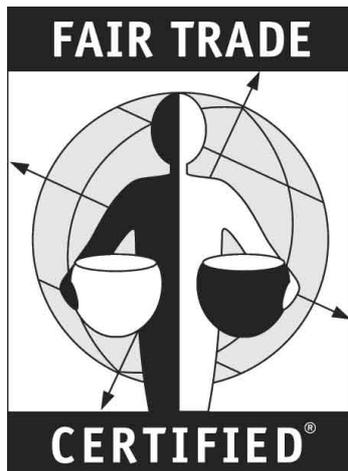
In the US, TransFair USA, an independent, third-party certification organization, regulates fair trade standards.

The fair trade logo indicates that farmers are paid a living wage for their crops, workers are treated with dignity, and small landowners are part of a co-op or other democratic organization.

The Fair Trade Certified™ Label guarantees consumers that strict economic, social, and environmental criteria were met in the production and trade of an agricultural product. Fair Trade Certification is currently available in the U.S. for coffee, tea and herbs, cocoa and chocolate, fresh fruit, flowers, sugar, rice, and vanilla. TransFair USA licenses companies to display the Fair Trade Certified label on products that meet strict international Fair Trade standards.

The certification empowers farmers and farm workers to lift themselves out of poverty by investing in their farms and communities, protecting the environment, and developing the business skills necessary to compete in the global marketplace.

-Nan Polunci



**Look for this Label!**

### SAAS Adds New Towns to Territory – We're Growing!

SAAS has recently added 17 new zip codes to its membership area. All towns in Warren County are now officially in our territory. In addition, most of Washington County, and the northern half of Saratoga County are also in our chapter region. Recently added zip codes, with their respective towns, include:

12811 Bakers Mills	12850 Middle Grove
12823 Cossayuna	12859 Porter Corners
12833 Greenfield Center	12861 Putnam Station
12836 Hague	12862 Riparius
12837 Hampton	12863 Rock City Falls
12838 Hartford	12873 Shushan
12843 Johnsburg	12874 Silver Bay
12848 Middle Falls	12884 Victory Mills
	12886 Wevertown

Do you know anyone who lives in these towns?

If so, why not invite them to become a member of our growing chapter? Information on membership can be found on the last page of this newsletter.

This newsletter is printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper.



## Big Cedar Swamp once again target of developers

The Big Cedar Swamp Coalition, a partnership of Southern Adirondack Audubon Society and Glens Falls-Saratoga ADK, once again successfully opposed large-scale development of Big Cedar Swamp on Quaker Road in Queensbury. Environmental Attorney John Caffry reviewed this new application 20 years after the first proposal for hotels and golf courses was denied.

The current proposal is for a "Big Box Store," recently revealed to be another Wal-Mart, with a large parking lot. Linda White and Joan Robertson attended hearings, and Joan offered testimony in support of maintaining as much native habitat as possible for the benefit of resident wildlife. Attorney Caffry spoke in defense of minimizing impact to the wetlands and the strict use of native species only in the mitigation project.

The developer agreed to modify the size of the project, reducing the blacktop from 5 acres to .2 acres. An agreement has been reached that only native plant species will be used in the area of mitigation, and no trees will be removed from the front of the site.

Watch the development as it progresses and see how citizen involvement really works.

*-Joan Robertson*



## Recycle your cell phone!

The EPA has targeted cell phone recycling because fewer than 20 percent of cell phones are recycled each year, and most people do not know where to recycle them. Recycling cell phones results in significant environmental savings and can benefit those in need.

Cell phones and accessories are made from valuable resources such as precious metals, copper, and plastics - all of which require energy to extract and manufacture. Recycling cell phones reduces greenhouse gas emissions, keeps valuable material out of landfills and incinerators, and conserves natural resources. Recycling just a million cell phones reduces greenhouse gas emissions equal to taking 1,368 cars off the road for a year.

Recycling all of the 100 million cell phones ready for end-of-life management in the US would save enough energy to power more than 194,000 US households with electricity for one year.

You can recycle your old cell phone at the Moreau Community Center at 144 Main St. in So. Glens Falls.

## WINTER TRACKING PROGRAM Saturday, January 31, 2009

Vince Walsh will conduct a tracking program on Saturday, January 31, 2009, at the Wilton Wildlife Preserve & Park's Camp Saratoga, located on Scout Rd. in Wilton. After a brief talk inside, he will lead a tracking trek outside, which will focus on identifying and interpreting tracks and trails.

You may register for a morning session from 9:00-12:00, or an afternoon class from 1:00-4:00.

Directions will be given when registering.

Mr. Walsh grew up in the foothills of the Adirondacks, in Greenfield Center, NY. He is a naturalist, tracker, NYS licensed guide, and graduate of Paul Smith's College.



Vince Walsh identifies an antler in the snow.

This **free** program is sponsored by Southern Adirondack Audubon Society, and is underwritten by a grant from Stewart's, Inc.

Class size is limited; please call WWPP at 450-0321 to pre-register.

Snowshoes are available to rent at WWP&P, with a discount to WWP&P members.

## Field Trip Reports

**Helen Buckner Memorial Preserve, Westhaven, VT**

**Oct 4, 2008**



**Immature Bald Eagle by Gordie Ellmers**

A field trip to the Helen Buckner Memorial Preserve on October 4<sup>th</sup> produced life birds for most of us, and a good time for all! Chickadees, nuthatches, and woodpeckers called and flitted through the trees as we hiked a woodland trail amidst peak fall foliage of glowing scarlet, crimson, and gold. Emerging at one point into a broad meadow, we were rewarded with stunning views of Bald Mountain and sightings of a variety of birds, including dozens of Cedar Waxwings, a Nashville Warbler, and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet. The trail re-entered the woods and gradually climbed 200 feet to a broad grassy area with good views of the Poultney River and surrounding lands. Our trip to the preserve ended with an exciting view of an endangered Peregrine Falcon circling overhead!

After the hike we drove to the nearby pier on South Bay, where we hoped to see migrating waterfowl. We were surprised and delighted by the arrival of an immature Bald Eagle! All binoculars were glued to the raptor as it demonstrated a masterful fishing technique. Suddenly, an adult Bald Eagle appeared on the scene! The adult, with its classic white head and tail shining in the late afternoon sunlight, chased the youngster until it dropped the fish. The adult dived, raking the waves with its talons in an unsuccessful attempt to snag the fish. Both birds made a few passes over the spot where the fish had disappeared before flying off to the north. Seeing the Bald Eagles, and being able to observe their natural interaction, was the perfect ending to a great day of birding! – *Laurie LaFond*



**Bog Meadow Brook, Saratoga**

**Oct 18, 2008**

A brisk day awaited the eight of us who ventured out on the Bog Meadow Brook Trail. Although the sun shone blindingly, we were still able to observe 21 species of birds. Blue Jays periodically scolded us from their tree-top perches. Flocks of American Robins chatted as they moved from tree to tree and Canada Geese were flying overhead toward their southern destinations. Black-capped Chickadees joined us along the trail, sometimes within three feet of our heads. At one point we watched as a lone Pileated Woodpecker worked a dead tree in search of insects. We observed a pair of Rusty Blackbirds mixed with Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles. The long-term decline of this species is being studied by avian researchers across the country; therefore, I'll be sure to report this sighting to [www.eBird.com](http://www.eBird.com).



**Pileated Woodpecker  
by Gordie Ellmers**

We were all delighted with a Golden-crowned Kinglet foraging in a White Pine tree. It flittered from branch to branch, extracting seeds from the cones. Two pairs of Hermit Thrushes provided for interesting study. One pair was found ahead of us on the trail before we got to the first bridge. They would search the ground for a bit and then fly into the bushes. After a few moments they'd fly back to the trail and forage some more. This gave us some great views. The second pair was found farther down the trail past the open water. Likewise, these birds were foraging on the trail, flying off into the bushes, and then returning to the trail. After reaching the boardwalk we rested and warmed up on the benches, soaking up the heat of the sun. It was a great fall morning to be out birding.

*-Jason Goldsmith*

## **Winter Field Trip Schedule**

**Saturday, December 6 8AM – 11AM**  
Please see notice to the right on this page!

**Saturday, January 17 2 PM - dusk**  
Winter Birds of the Ft. Edward IBA led by Laurie  
LaFond and Jason Goldsmith

Birding by car through the Ft. Edward IBA for Northern  
Harriers, Rough-legged Hawks, Short-eared Owls, and  
other birds. Call Laurie at 955-8301 or Jason at 480-  
4243 to register and for further information.

**Saturday, January 31 9AM & 1PM**  
Winter Tracking Workshop & Field Trek at the Wilton  
Wildlife Preserve & Park with Vince Walsh. Two  
sessions – 9am & 1pm. See page 4 for  
additional information.

**Saturday, February 28 2 PM – dusk**  
Wintering Birds of the Grasslands  
Don Polunci, Leader - Mona Bearor, Co-leader

Join us as we travel by car through the grasslands of  
Washington county looking for Short-eared Owls and  
other wintering raptors. Eastern Bluebird, Snow  
Bunting, Horned Lark, and Northern Shrike are other  
possible species. Bring binoculars and scopes if you  
have them. Please call Don at 793-1531 or Mona at 745-  
8637 to register for this trip and obtain meeting location  
and carpooling information.

**Tuesday, March 17 10AM**  
Snowshoeing at the Saratoga National Historic Park with  
Linda White. Please call Linda at 518-792-4446 for  
more information and to register.

**THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS EXTENDS A  
HEARTFELT "THANK YOU!" TO THOSE WHO  
RESPONDED TO OUR RECENT MEMBERSHIP  
APPEAL. A FULL LIST OF DONORS WILL BE  
PRINTED IN THE MARCH ISSUE OF  
*THE FLEDGLING.***

## **Chili Fundraiser to benefit the legal fund for the Fort Edward Grasslands IBA**



**When? Dec 6 11am – 4pm**

**Where? Argyle American  
Legion, corner of  
Rt40 & County Rt47**

**What? Chili, Soup, and  
Dessert**

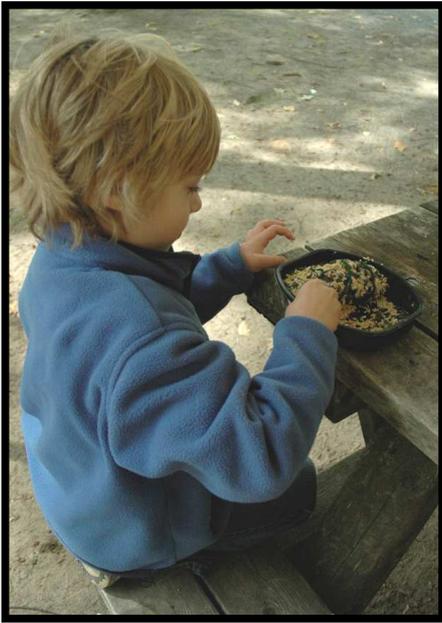
**Many Interesting items have been  
donated for the Silent Auction**

**\$10 donation requested at the door**

**From 8am - 11am, Jason Goldsmith  
will lead a birding trip through  
the Fort Edward Grasslands IBA.  
Meet at the Argyle American  
Legion.**

**Donation of \$5.00 requested  
for the field trip.**

**Contact Jason at 480-4243 or  
adk\_wild\_jay.com for more info or  
to register for the birding trip.**



## **SAAS Members participate in Moreau State Park Nature Fest**

SAAS participated in the Moreau State Park Nature Fest celebration in September. Several environmental groups presented programs and exhibits throughout the day.

Dozens of kids and their parents made pinecone bird feeders at our table by rolling the pinecone in shortening, then birdseed. All were anxious to see what kinds of birds they would attract to their yards.

We also distributed educational brochures and chapter information, and sold suet cakes, cages, and raffle tickets. It was a good opportunity to partner with the State Park, and we look forward to returning next year.

*-Nan Polunci*

*Left: One young naturalist learns about bird feeding at the SAAS table!*

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Witnessing the impact that these invasive species have had on the environment made us realize the role that people have played in spreading invasive species. Controlling them is difficult but imperative for our health, the ecosystems, the economy, and tourism. I will present a Power Point program on Hawaii sometime next year.

Please feel free to contact me with any suggestions or comments you have about our chapter. Hope to see you at one of our events.

*-Don Polunci*

## **Quarterly Quote**

**“Now is the time to confront  
this challenge once and for all.  
Delay is no longer an option.  
Denial is no longer an  
acceptable response.”**

**-President-elect Barack Obama speaking by video  
to the climate conference in Los Angeles,  
California, November 18, 2008**

## **WANTED!**

**New Editor  
for  
*The Fledgling***



This issue marks the beginning of my eighth year as editor of your newsletter. I have made an effort to expand and diversify the articles in the hope of offering you an interesting and informative publication.

Personal responsibilities and a return to work have made continuing as editor difficult. I would also like to be able to spend more time preparing outreach materials for the communities that our chapter serves, enhancing our website, leading field trips, and working on conservation projects.

If you enjoy working with others and would like to try your hand at desktop publishing, please contact any board member listed on the mailing page of this newsletter. You will be providing an important service to the chapter.

We'd love to welcome you as our new editor!

## SOUTHERN ADIRONDACK AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Nancy Polunci	793-1531
Ginny Vogel	584-3936
<b>2008-2011</b>	
Linda Hoyt	494-2380
Claire Hunter	793-9088
Linda White	792-4446

## APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

National membership in the Audubon Society includes the magazine, *Audubon*, and the SAAS newsletter, *The Fledgling*. The cost is \$20 annually for regular membership and \$15 for seniors and students. Make checks payable to "National Audubon Society" and send with name, address, and phone number to the address listed below. Membership as a "Chapter Supporter" is \$10 annually and includes *The Fledgling* and all chapter activities. Make check payable to "Southern Adirondack Audubon Society" and send with name, address, and phone number to:

Pat Fitzgerald, 79 Laurel Ln., Queensbury, NY 12804

### Newsletter Submission Policy

We welcome submissions to *The Fledgling*. Please email your articles to the editor if possible and include your name and contact information. We reserve the right to edit as necessary. If you cannot email, please contact Barb Putnam or Mona Bearor at the numbers listed above.

## The Fledgling



4 Windy Lane  
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Vol. 26 No. 2– Winter 2009

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