



The Fledgling

Newsletter of the Southern Adirondack Audubon Society
www.audubon.noncommercial.org

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Sept – Nov 2005

President's Message

This has been a good summer for birds around Brant Lake, despite the overall numbers of birds appearing to be lower than usual. My birding pen pal in Iowa writes that her correspondents around the country report the numbers of birds are less than usual. It's an observation that bears watching.

Three Wood Duck families were hatched on the creek, one of which liked sunning on my dock. I watched an Osprey nest that contained three young, and attempted some photography. Watching the young refuse to share food with their nest mates was interesting. Often an adult perched near the nest. Then there would be a constant interplay of calls between the adult and the nestlings. After fledging, the young would return to the nest for the night. There were a few Bald Eagle sightings, and at the end of August I saw a mature Golden Eagle.

A pair of House Wrens nested at the back of my garage after filling every available birdhouse with twigs. Finches and Chickadees nested nearby. A male Ruby-throated Hummingbird turned the clothesline into a lookout perch from which he could keep an eye on two feeders and two flowerbeds. The Gray Catbird frolicked in the shrubs across the road and spent many days trying to find a way through the canopy over my blueberries. Purple Finches, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and Evening Grosbeaks brought their fledglings to the feeders in August. Song and Chipping Sparrows brought their young to glean the spilled seed from the grass. Blackbirds began flocking and gulping down seed.

It doesn't seem as though the summer days should have slipped by so rapidly. With the same feeling of time being so elusive, I am amazed that the last four years have passed so quickly. It is now time for me to relinquish my position as President to someone else. Who will that person be?

For several years SAAS has been held together and administrated by a very few people doing double
con't. next col.

SAAS Calendar

Monthly chapter meetings are held at the Crandall Library, on the fourth Wednesday of the month, except as may be noted below. For changes and updates, please check this column in each issue. Meetings are also published in the *Post Star*, on the SAAS website and on the Post Star online events calendar. Mark your calendar and join us for the presentations by guest speakers listed below. The meetings start promptly at 7pm. Members are encouraged to bring a guest!

Sept 28 - Sean Mahar from Audubon New York will present an "Update on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge"

Oct 26 - Annual Election of Officers
public program to be announced

Nov 16 - public program to be announced

con't. from prev. col.

duty without a full slate of officers. With the exception of a writer for the *Fledgling*, no one has stepped forward and asked, "How may I help?" Now, more than ever, SAAS needs people to fill office and board vacancies. Elections are in October. If we don't have enough people to run SAAS, we may have to disband. I hope that there are some of you who will be willing to help us keep going, who will call any officer listed on the back of the *Fledgling* and tell us what you could do to help.

We need you.

Linda Hoyt,
President

In this Issue...

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Birding Workshop at "Camp Inspiration" - see page 3

Look who's in The Book Nook! - see page 4

From the Membership Chair - Claire Hunter



WELCOME: New Chapter Supporters:
John Caffrey - Glens Falls, NY
Margot Paul Ernst - New York, NY
Elaine Kee - Glens Falls, NY
Suzanne Shumway - Greenwich, NY

Our fall review reflects a goodly harvest of Chapter Supporters, up about a third since last September. This is wonderful news as SAAS is becoming more dependant on local support since National has reduced chapter funding. The \$10 local dues ALL STAYS HERE for our services including public programs, the newsletter, and presentations on birding for civic clubs and area schools.

TRIBUTE: A long-time special friend, a vibrant lady who traveled from North River to attend almost every monthly program - Carolyn Kaufmann died this summer. Like her many SAAS friends, I will miss her phone calls and chats at meetings. Helen Kraus, a special friend of Carolyn's made a memorial donation to SAAS in her memory.

We still offer gift memberships, with card if requested. I'm always happy to receive calls from our far-flung membership.

SAAS ANNUAL ELECTIONS

Vacancies in the offices of President, Vice-President and Secretary need to be filled for the coming year. In addition, there are Board of Director positions unfilled at this time. Elections will be held at the meeting on October 26, 2005 at 7pm.

Please contact any officer or Board member listed on the last page of this newsletter if you are interested in filling a position. Only with your help can SAAS remain an active Audubon chapter working for conservation and education in the local area.

Editor's Ramblings



Once again hot summer days are behind us and fall is fast approaching. I wish the season could remain for a bit longer with its mornings filled with birdsong and colorful warblers challenging my birding skills, however, I anxiously look forward to fall hours spent viewing migrating waterfowl and snowshoeing on a quiet winter day.

Thanks go out to High Peaks Audubon member, Dana Rohleder of Port Kent, for his review of Bob Budliger's field guide, "Birds of New York State." Although not written for our chapter, Dana gave permission for us to reprint his review for our members. I purchased this book shortly after its release and find I turn to it frequently for interesting and valuable information on NY birds.

SAAS member Paul Saffold has contributed an essay on his discovery of nesting peregrines in South Glens Falls. Since this nest was not viewable from any public areas Paul's observations from his workplace were invaluable and we are grateful for the "inside" story!

As a participant in the birding workshop at Camp Inspiration, I can attest to the feelings of joy and satisfaction gained from that project. Activities like this, which bring nature into the lives of families, are what Audubon means to me.

After spending 2 weeks in Alaska this summer, my resolve to save the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is even stronger. PLEASE contact your representatives in Washington and state your views on this very important conservation issue. As Morris Udall said in 1978, *"In terms of wilderness preservation, Alaska is the last frontier. This time, given one great final chance, let us strive to do it right. Not in our generation, nor ever again, will we have a land and wildlife opportunity approaching the scope and importance of this one."*

By now every member of SAAS should be aware that the chapter needs new helping hands. Those of us who have been trying to keep the chapter active for the last several years are committed to continuing if enough of you will offer your services to help us. We have ideas for the future that we would like to implement and we hope that you will have new and exciting ideas for us to pursue as well. I truly hope the fall will bring a renewed interest and a revitalized board to SAAS.

-Editor, Mona Bearor

Peregrine!

contributed by Paul Saffold



May 27th. It wasn't that unusual. I've seen them occasionally the last 10 years or so. Usually one is in pursuit of the many pigeons in the area. However, I was surprised to see one again about an hour later in the same area. It was flying into an adjacent limestone quarry. I watched closely to see where it went.

Often, my work has me outside going from one building to another. Being right on the Hudson River I've been able to see quite a variety of birds, from migrating nighthawks at dusk, to wintering Bald Eagles, Cedar Waxwings, Chimney Swifts and swallows feeding over the river.

When the Peregrine flew for the third time to the same area in the quarry, I was really excited. In early summer of 2002 there was an adult Peregrine with 2 juveniles in the area. They could be seen perched in Glens Falls on the Stitchman Towers, on St. Mary's Church, on the stacks at Finch and across the river on the tower at the SCA Paper Co. in South Glens Falls. So, I had reason to think that maybe there was the possibility of a nesting pair in the area.

On Saturday I was able to spend time in the afternoon after work watching for the Peregrine. When it finally showed up I was able to see it land in the quarry. Over the next several days, I watched as one

would bring food for the other, which was apparently on a nest. The nest is well-hidden behind grass-like vegetation on a ledge in the quarry. I spent some time every day, either before or after work, or on my days off from work, observing the nest area.

One day three ravens, an adult and 2 juveniles that had fledged from a nest in the quarry earlier in the spring, flew by the peregrine nest. The peregrine that was on the nest flew out to meet them, screaming and diving at them until they flew off. Later that same day as one peregrine flew in with food, the other flew from the nest. They met and like sprinters in a relay race passing a baton, exchanged the food in midair.

Wednesday June 8th I saw a chick! At over 200 yards from my observation point to the nest I could see a fuzzy white blob. On Saturday the 11th I could see a second chick!

I had contacted Barb Loucks, a research scientist with DEC in Albany, about the nest. On Tuesday the 14th Barb, Scott Crocoll, Shiela Tuttle, and 2 interns, all from DEC came to observe and confirm the nest. Scott got a GPS fix on the site for their records. Barb Loucks had written a nice article in the April 2005 issue of the NYS Conservationist about Peregrines in New York. She stated that last year there were 37 successful nesting pairs, out of 52 known nests, producing 79 young.

On July 2nd both young fledged. One reappeared on the ledge on the 3rd and again on the 4th. Since then I've seen both young with an adult several times on the towers at Finch. Glens Falls joins several of the larger cities of NY with her own nesting Peregrines. Keep your eyes turned to the sky and you may get a look at this magnificent bird of prey.

SAAS presents Birding Workshop at "Camp Inspiration"

Linda Hoyt, Joan Robertson, Ginny Vogel, Linda White and Mona Bearor, members of Southern Adirondack Audubon, assisted by Andrew Mackie and Sean Mahar of Audubon New York, spent two mornings in June presenting a beginning birding program at Camp Inspiration, a week-long summer camp for wheelchair and ventilator dependent children. The program was presented to campers, along with their siblings and parents, at the Double H Hole in the Woods camp in Lake Luzerne and was designed to encourage the families to try birding as a family activity. As a tie-in to our presentations, an afternoon live bird of prey demonstration was conducted by Karl Brummert and Theresa Perez from the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center in Oyster Bay, NY.

Feeders, mounting poles, squirrel guards and starter seed were supplied by the chapter and the feeders were placed by our members in the camp arboretum several weeks prior to the program dates. Local birders Cheryl Tucker and Eric Krantz generously donated 15 sets of binoculars and field guides. Cheryl assisted our members with presentations and Eric gave a short introduction to binocular use. The classroom instruction included general bird anatomy, bird identification by sight and sound and attracting birds to the backyard. The field work portion was held in the arboretum despite a misty, cool morning and the birds that were seen and heard brought joy to the faces of these special children. Pinecone owl kits were provided by Joan Robertson and were made by each child as a souvenir to take home. Audubon New York presented each camper with a singing Audubon plush bird. Chapter members who took part in this program voiced special feelings of gratitude for being involved with such a rewarding activity with these exceptional children.

The Book Nook



"Birds of New York State" by Bob Budliger and Gregory Kennedy reviewed by Dana Rohleder of Port Kent, NY

ISBN:1551053268; Format: Paperback; 384 pages; Publication Date: April 1, 2005; Size: 5.5" x 8.5" x 0.81"

I just thought I'd give you my impressions of the new field guide, "Birds of New York State" written by Budliger & Kennedy. It is true field guide dedicated strictly to birds that are likely to be seen in NYS - not necessarily breeders or common birds. It includes roughly 350 species, with an entire page dedicated to each species.

The first few pages are something quite welcome in a field guide - a brief Table of Contents immediately followed by a GREAT Reference Guide that has illustrations of virtually every species crammed very neatly into 12 pages broken down into rough taxonomic orders/families. These pages include under the picture the common name, the size, and the page number. This is very similar to the way Sibley did his Family plates at the beginning of each section, but instead, all are placed in the front of the book - much more convenient for a beginner that doesn't know where to look in a field guide. The sections are then color coded to match the page "tabs" for quick field location.

The Introduction is similar to most of the newer guides, with the addition of major birding areas and Top 100 Hotspots Birding Sites with a locator map showing major ecological zones within the state.

Species accounts are quite detailed with excellent, plain-language descriptions and "Best Sites" section to help narrow your search, as well as perfunctory range maps. Typically, one or two large, painted illustrations for each species (usually male/female) and many species have some smaller illustrations of the bird in flight. The illustrations are superb and the color quite accurate and natural, which was one of my few complaints with Sibley's guides that make the bird a little too "cartoonish". My biggest criticism of the

plates in this guide is that they were not all painted by the same person. Accordingly, from plate-to-plate and species-to-species, there are rather pronounced style differences in the illustrations. One illustrator favors smooth, soft feathering, and another prefers almost to tease the feathers out for a roughed-up appearance - like the bird just emerged from a vacuum cleaner. Both are quite attractive, but I favor the former, because that is typically the way a bird looks in the field at even a slight distance. But my complaint is that if you are trying to distinguish very similar species, such as Acadian and Alder Flycatchers, the illustrations make them appear very different, even though we know the differences are slight. But I can find few faults with the accuracy of either style - each has its own merits.

The species text I feel was reminiscent of Peterson's early field guides, but more elaborate. Interesting and informative bits of birdlore and natural history make reading the book from cover-to-cover an enlightening and entertaining endeavor.

The end of the book contains a glossary, checklist, and both scientific and common-name indices. The back cover includes yet another, more condensed, color coded & tab indexed "Quick Guide" with page numbers - yet another outstanding feature.

Although positioned as a state field guide, I would say it would adequately cover the northeast, with the exception of some regional specialties. I don't believe I have ever seen a regional field guide that even comes close to this volume and I would like to see a guide in the same format for North America. For \$21.95, it is an outstanding bargain!

Fight to Protect the Arctic Heats Up

by Sean Mahar

Conservation Chair of SAAS

Audubon New York Associate Director of Conservation

As you have read in past issues of the *Fledgling*, there have been numerous proposals to explore for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. These proposals have been defeated thanks to your efforts and those of other Audubon members across the nation who understand that drilling this pristine haven for wildlife would disrupt and ultimately destroy one of America's last remaining truly wild places. Drilling in the Arctic Refuge would forever damage a national treasure but do next to nothing to address our energy needs. However, Congress will soon vote on a budget reconciliation bill that would open the Arctic Refuge to oil drilling. Now, more than ever before, it is critical that your voice is heard on this issue.

On **Tuesday, September 20th**, tens of thousands of conservationists concerned with preserving the Arctic for future generations will come together in Washington, D.C. on the steps the U.S. Capitol to make sure Congress protects the Arctic Refuge. And now you have the chance to take part in this major environmental rally for **FREE!**

As soon as possible, register for this extremely important event by visiting http://www.arcticrefugeaction.org/takeaction/arcticrefugeactionday_audubon.html.

Once you've signed up, you will find out all you need to know to be able to make a successful trip to Washington. **FREE BUSES** will be provided at easily accessible locations near you, complete with expert guides who will talk about what's at stake with the Refuge and assist with logistics of the day. The National Audubon Society's Washington Policy office will be hosting an open house all day with free food and drinks, and policy experts to answer all your questions. This will be a tremendous opportunity to participate in the democratic process, and make your voice heard on protecting one of America's most pristine natural treasures.

We have **ONE FINAL CHANCE** to make sure this pristine wilderness stays out of the hands of the special interests! Please visit the National Audubon Society Arctic Action page for more information: www.protecttheartctic.com, or contact me at smahar@audubon.org.

NOTICE

It's not too early to begin thinking about participating in the local Christmas Bird Count. Routes will be redesigned this year to cover more territory and that means additional drivers and counters will be needed. If you would like to participate in this exciting and fun citizen science project, please contact Linda White at 792-4446.

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2003-2006

Joan Robertson	656-9223
Linda Theis	793-4557
Position Open	

2004-2007

Mona Bearor	745-8637
Joan Dobert	793-1660
Ginny Vogel	584-3936

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 address listed below. Membership as a "Chapter Supporter" only is \$10 annually and includes a subscription to *The Fledgling*. Make check payable to "Southern Adirondack Audubon Society" and send with name, address and phone number to: Claire Hunter, 3 Edgewood Dr., South Glens Falls, New York 12803.

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 submit to Barbara Putnam at 190 Palmer Ridge Rd., Gansevoort, NY 12831. Please be sure to include your phone number and call her at 518-792-7542 before sending material.

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