



The Fledgling

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

Vol. 23 No. 2

Dec 2005 – Feb 2006

Greetings and Happy Holidays from your new president!

I recently responded to a desperate plea for help from SAAS and I am pleasantly surprised to find myself as president! Allow me to introduce myself.

I have been an art teacher at Glens Falls High School for 31 years, and have taught photography for the last 25 years. My interest in birds began when I was teaching woodcarving. The assignment was to carve shorebirds and my students asked to see photos for reference. A trip to Maine to photograph sanderlings, willets, and peeps was fun and exciting. As I photographed the birds, I naturally wanted to learn about identification and behaviors. My wife and I soon found ourselves planning our vacations around bird sanctuaries and 'hot spots.' We have traveled to Machias Seal Island to view Atlantic Puffins, Aransas Wildlife Refuge to see Whooping Cranes, Amherst Island for owls, and Bosque del Apache for Sandhill Cranes, just to name a few destinations. In Florida, at the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, I discovered that Audubon members could enter for free. So began my association with Audubon, which eventually lead me to this group. I have enjoyed presenting programs to SAAS and meeting members locally, and with your help and support, I look forward to serving as your president. I welcome your suggestions and input. Feel free to call, e-mail or introduce yourself at a meeting.

-Don Polunci

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 programs start promptly at 7pm. Members are encouraged to bring a guest!

December – no meeting; "Happy Holidays"

Jan 25 - public program to be announced

Feb 22 - public program to be announced

 Audubon

 CORNELL LAB OF ORNITHOLOGY

Birdsource
Birding with a Purpose
www.birdsource.org

Birdsource is a working partnership between citizens and scientists, developed and managed by National Audubon and Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Data collected is invaluable for tracking the density and movement of birds, irruptions of specific species, even spread of avian diseases. Project FeederWatch, the Christmas Bird Count and the Great Backyard Bird Count are all a part of this effort. Ebird is an online interactive database of submitted bird sightings. Backyard and casual sightings become a part of "the big picture" when added to thousands of others. Get involved in these citizen science projects and you'll add another dimension to your birding experiences.

From the Membership Chair

-Claire Hunter



In a Holly Daze? Mailed out? A great gift choice is an Audubon membership in SAAS. Giving a Chapter Sponsorship - \$10 annually - includes The Fledgling with local information and meeting notices.

This is a gift that keeps on giving all year and brings fellowship and a stimulating interest. If you so choose, the chapter will send a gift card to the recipient.

Carolyn Kaufmann Memorial: A contribution by long-time SAAS member Pat Santora, Thank you, Pat

WELCOME BELLS RING FOR NEW CHAPTER SUPPORTERS!

Joe Kern, Adirondack; Rosemary Pusateri, Cleverdale; Helen Mohr, Queensbury have all joined as SAAS Chapter Supporters. Their entire dues will remain in this area, working for conservation and education. Additionally, Paul Arthur of Queensbury joined National Audubon through our coded application bringing us a dues share. Thanks for the support, Paul! A special thank you also to those who have sent a donation to the chapter when renewing a national membership. National no longer provides a chapter share of renewal dues so these extra funds are very welcome.

JANUARY LOOKS FORWARD AND BACKWARD, named for the Roman god who did the double view. This year - a look backward - two birds were featured in the news under happy circumstances. In the spring we learned that Red-tailed Hawk Pale Male and his mate, Lola, had returned to the restored nest on a high rise in Manhattan. Audubon New York played a key role in the negotiations that allowed for a safe return for these long-time New Yorkers. Later in the year came a confirmed sighting of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker which threw the birding world into a spin! Believers and non-believers alike were fascinated by the story behind this announcement.

Locally, we were happy to read of the carefully observed nest of a Peregrine Falcon, reported by SAAS member Paul Saffold.

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2006 - Let us hope that we will keep our beautiful plants and birds and preserve the habitat that fosters them.

SAAS Christmas Bird Count to be held on December 18th

Will "winter finches" or northern raptors spread across the continent this December? Will snow and ice blanket North America, or will mild conditions prevail until the New Year? Will observers along the storm-ravaged Gulf Coast be able to discover the effects of this summer's hurricanes on their local birds? Tens of thousands of CBC participants will be outside counting birds, from the high Canadian and Alaskan Arctic to southern South America to find out.

Additional pairs of eyes to identify birds and extra hands for recordkeeping are needed to help with the Christmas Bird Count in our own Hudson Falls count circle. Our count circle, with a 15 mile diameter from a central point in Hudson Falls, we have a large area to cover so join us for a day of fun birding that tallies valuable data used in seeing trends in our local bird populations. If you would like to be a part of this historic annual gathering of data, Contact Linda White at 518-792-4446.



A Word of Thanks

Many thanks from the SAAS board, officers and members to the outgoing president, **Linda Hoyt**, for her years of service to the chapter. Linda stepped forward to take over as president much as Don recently did - when the chapter was in need of an infusion of new blood and some direction. Under her guidance the chapter remained afloat; we continued presenting public programs, published a newsletter for members and participated in bird counts and monitoring projects. We hope to continue on the course she set for us and become an even stronger and more active chapter in years to come.

Development Proposal Could Impact Fort Edward Grasslands IBA

By Sean Mahar

With the dredging of PCBs from the Hudson River moving forward and as new proposals for industrial development begin to surface in the region, development pressure is on the rise throughout the Southern Adirondacks. And as the need for more housing and infrastructure increases, this could impact important bird habitats around the region. Already, one such proposal is currently moving forward within Fort Edward Grasslands Important Bird Area (IBA).

The Killian Farm subdivision proposal, located on Route 197 in the town of Fort Edward, is a 200 acre farm situated within the 13,000 acre agricultural grassland complex that has been designated as an IBA by Audubon New York, as it supports several priority at-risk bird species, including; Henslow's Sparrow, Northern Harrier, Upland Sandpiper, and Short-eared Owl. In New York, pastures, hayfields, and recently abandoned farmland provide very important habitat to a host of "grassland" bird species that nest exclusively on the ground in these agricultural areas. Additionally, several species which breed in the Arctic use the same habitat as a wintering area, giving this a year-round value. This group of birds is declining extremely rapidly; primarily due to the loss of farmland in New York (and across the country), either from development or succession of farmland to forests. The proposed development includes the construction of up to 397 housing units on prime grassland bird habitat, and could significantly impact populations of grassland birds that can be found in the area, and fragment this important grassland habitat. Numerous other surrounding land owners within the IBA are interested in selling their property, and are awaiting approval of this proposal to move ahead.

Members of the Southern Adirondack Audubon Society, with the help of Audubon New York's bird conservation department, are in the process of developing and implementing a monitoring plan to conduct a cataloging of bird species throughout the Fort Edward Grasslands IBA, with special attention to the Killian Farm area. This will include a winter, spring and breeding season monitoring periods. Area farmers have already opened their properties for monitoring, and we have already collected baseline data from members past bird sightings, which will be useful for comparisons. Our major need now is to enlist the help of Chapter members, to help conduct this monitoring of the Fort Edward Grasslands Important Bird Area.

If you are interested in helping with this bird survey, or would like more information please contact: Linda White at 792-4446 or Sean Mahar - smahar@audubon.org or 669-1768.

SAAS Moves Forward! Members are Invited to Attend Board Meetings

The chapter is entering a new year with a full complement of officers and board members for the first time in over 5 years. Those of us involved in the day to day running of the chapter find it exciting that so many were willing to offer their time and efforts to SAAS! Please take time to review the list of directors and officers on the mailing page of this newsletter. In the interest of encouraging further member participation, we would like to invite members to attend our board meetings.

The meetings are held once a month on Sunday afternoons and scheduled dates with the meeting place will be posted in each future edition of the newsletter. Get to know the officers and directors of SAAS.

Attendance requires no commitment ; however, we hope it will be a way for some to become more active in the chapter's work. If you have limited time but would like to show support for the chapter or offer ideas to the board, join us at a board meeting - we'd love to see you!

Upcoming Board Meetings:

January 15, 2006 2-4pm

February 12, 2006 2-4pm

These meetings will be held at the Lake George Association offices, located on Rt 9N, exit 21 of I-87, directly across from the southbound exit.

SOUTHERN ADIRONDACK AUDUBON SOCIETY

President	Don Polunci	nanandon@adelphia.net
Vice-President	Karin Badey	518-696-5109
Secretary	Rosemary Pusateri	518-656-9054
Treasurer	Virginia Vogel	518-584-3936
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DIRECTORS

2003-2006	
Joan Robertson	656-9223
Lynn Sickles	761-3324
Linda Theis	793-4557
2004-2007	
Joan Dobert	793-1660
Drew Monthie	792-9557
Ginny Vogel	584-3936
2005-2008	
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 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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