



The Fledgling

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

Vol. 23 No. 4

Jun - Aug 2006

President's Message

Springtime greetings!

I had the opportunity to attend the Audubon New York Spring Assembly at the Gideon Putnam in Saratoga on March 24-26. How appropriate to see a pileated woodpecker on the grounds of the hotel when I arrived! I finally met the state officers with whom I have exchanged e-mails since January. The first evening opened with a very informative presentation on the New York State Invasive Species Task Force, given by Steve Sanford of the New York State DEC. On Saturday we reviewed and adopted the Conservation Resolutions. These are the major conservation initiatives with which Audubon New York will be involved in the coming year. The afternoon field trip to the Fort Edward Grasslands was well attended. Everyone was delighted to see the birds that we have been monitoring there. On Sunday I attended lectures on Avian Flu Education Outreach by Richard Haley and Global Warming and Birds by Mike Burger.

Attending Audubon New York council meetings affords a great opportunity to gather valuable information on current statewide initiatives. It is also a platform for meeting like-minded Auduboners and sharing ideas. These people are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and friendly. Attending my first Audubon New York Council meeting boosted my enthusiasm to an even higher level and I returned with several ideas for growing our Southern Adirondack chapter. If you'd like to help us as we involve SAAS in new and exciting programs, please contact any board member as listed on the back page of this newsletter.

My association with SAAS continues to be a positive experience. I am very grateful to our dedicated and
see President - con't. col. 2

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!

June 28 - "Our Majestic Waterbirds"
with Larry King

July - no meeting
August - no meeting

President - con't. from col. 1
well-informed board for their guidance and leadership during my first few months as president. It is a pleasure to work with this group and I am still discovering all that Audubon and SAAS does.

Please try to attend our programs and field trips, and see for yourself!
-Don Polunci

In this Issue...

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The Peregrines are Back! - see page 6

Summer Field Trips - see page 7

From the Membership Chair -Claire Hunter

WELCOME- New Chapter Supporters!



Irene Burns – Glens Falls
Bruce and Gail Cushing – Greenwich
Roger Fulton – Glens Falls
Jason Goldsmith – Granville
Russ Hilliard – Lake George
Nancy Polunci – Queensbury
Mr./Mrs. Skip Stranahan – Lake George

This spring blossoming of Chapter Supporters is wonderful news! SAAS is becoming more dependent on local support since National Audubon has reduced chapter funding. The Chapter Supporter \$10 annual dues is all applied to local services including public programs, the newsletter, the new Jr. Birder program, and presentations on birding for civic clubs and local schools.

From National Audubon, 50 new members have been assigned to our chapter and 29 members have renewed. We no longer receive a share of National renewal dues; however, NEW National members can help our chapter finances by making sure that the membership form has our chapter code. If you are not a member currently and plan to join National Audubon, you may send the check to me for forwarding and I will process your membership for you. Alternately, you may call me for the code information. The dues from properly coded memberships are credited in full to the chapter for the first year and this helps our treasury!

Spring has sprung into our chapter area which encompasses 29 zip codes. I've found that this geographic expanse makes for a wonderful enrichment of Audubon experience.

With the busy spring and summer seasons come many reasons to send SAAS gift memberships – graduations, anniversaries, birthdays, prizes for good year-end report cards. Yearly dues for Chapter Supporters are only \$10. Please consider giving a dear one a gift membership to SAAS. I'll be happy to send an appropriate card.

This summer marks the 22nd anniversary of the SAAS charter by National Audubon. For us 1984 was a very good year! I hope you have a FUN SUMMER and that your birding and wildflower walks are happy hours.

Birdathon 2006

Reported by Joan Robertson

Who would have thought that April showers would continue into late May? Most of us who ventured afield to count spring bird species got wet! Common yard birds were easy to come by, however warblers, swallows, and thrushes were scarce. Only 13 species of warblers were sighted. Black flies were also scarce, indicating, I guess, that we can't have one without the other!

The species count of 117 was average for this area at this time of year. The list of birders submitting data, however, was way up, thanks to the 13 teams who participated. There was no name on one list that was submitted, but we thank you for the information and the drawing of the Blue-winged Warbler! We sincerely hope that this increase in participation continues next year!

Some of the more interesting finds were: Blue-winged Teal, Osprey, Spotted Sandpiper, Purple Martin, Fox Sparrow, Blue-winged Warbler, Yellow-throated Vireo, and Grasshopper Sparrow.

Orchard Oriole was counted for the first time ever. Double-crested Cormorants and Red-bellied Woodpeckers are becoming annual occurrences; in the past they were occasional in our area. Grassland breeders such as Eastern Meadowlark and Savannah Sparrow are becoming more scarce as open space is swallowed up for housing developments. Henslow's and Vesper Sparrow were not seen at all this year.

Please contact me at 518-656-9223 or jhrob@localnet.com if you would like a copy of the complete count.

If you participated, I hope you had fun. Please come out and do it again next year!

The SAAS Board of Directors, Officers and Committee Chairs will meet on the following dates:

June 11 2-4pm

July & August- no meeting

Members are welcome and encouraged to attend.
Please come and offer your comments on how we can make SAAS what YOU want it to be!

The June meeting will be held at the Lake George Association offices located on Rt 9N, exit 21 of I-87, the log building directly across from the southbound exit.

BIRD SONG AND RAPTORS ON TAP FOR 59th ANNUAL NYSOA MEETING

The 59th Annual Meeting of the NY State Ornithological Assoc. is scheduled for Sept. 29 and 30 and Oct. 1 at the Morris Conference Center at the State University of NY at Oneonta, NY. Hosted by the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Soc., the weekend will feature workshops, field trips, papers session, a picnic lunch at the Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch, and a Saturday evening banquet with speaker Donald E. Kroodsma, Professor Emeritus at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.



Located in the northern Catskill Mountains, along the Susquehanna River, the setting provides a great location for early fall scenery, birding and other outdoor activities. Field trips will include visits to Otsego Lake, the "Glimmerglass" of James Fenimore Cooper; canoeing/kayaking in a freshwater marsh; eagle and waterfowl spotting on Delaware County's reservoirs; and the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Soc. Sanctuary, home of the Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch.

Non-birding opportunities include historic Cooperstown, known for its Farmers Museum, the Baseball Hall of Fame, historic Fenimore House and other attractions. The city of Oneonta has a revitalized downtown with cultural and entertainment venues.

Saturday night's speaker, Donald Kroodsma, has studied birdsong for more than thirty years and was recognized as the "reigning authority on the biology of avian vocal behavior" in the citation for his 2003 Elliott Coues Award from the American Ornithologists' Union. He is author of the critically acclaimed *The Singing Life of Birds*. The Art and Science of Listening to Birdsong, published last year by Houghton-Mifflin, accompanied by a CD with 98 selections of birdsong. Professor Kroodsma has been featured on radio shows and in articles in such publications as Audubon, Scientific American, and Outside. Dedicated to tropical birds, Professor Kroodsma donates proceeds from his appearances to conservation of these species.

The usual camaraderie and good spirit of the NYSOA meetings will also be in place--please join us for this special weekend! A registration form can be found at www.nysbirds.org. Further information, contact Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net

FT. Edward Grasslands Monitoring Update

SAAS has been awarded a grant from Audubon New York to monitor the wintering and nesting species in the Fort Edward Grasslands IBA. The winter portion of this project has been completed and, as this newsletter goes to press, we are preparing to embark on the summer breeding portion of the project. Thirty-three different locations within the Fort Edward Grasslands Important Bird Area will each be visited three times and the breeding bird species will be recorded. The data will be submitted to Audubon New York and will be analyzed to help determine which portions of the IBA are the most valuable for nesting grassland birds. Member participation in projects such as this is invaluable in gathering data to advance the knowledge of bird species, and therefore, aid in the conservation of the lands they need if they are to survive for future generations.

-Mona Bearor

Environmental Funding Still Tied Up by Sean Mahar

In the Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2006-2007, Governor Pataki had proposed more than \$1.4 billion for environmental and recreational programs. Included in this budget was the expansion of the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) to \$180 million, up \$30 million from last year. The EPF is the State's only legally dedicated source of environmental funding for a host of projects vital to the preservation of New York's environment including open space and farmland protection, invasive species prevention and eradication, biodiversity protection, and several programs to improve and protect water quality.

In March, the Legislature decided to further increase the EPF to \$200 million. The Governor was supportive of this increase, but the new EPF funding was not approved as part of the budget that was passed in April, due to disagreements between the parties involved on how the money was to be spent. Since that time, the Governor has resubmitted a \$200 million EPF budget specifying the projects that would be funded. Now the legislature, even though they have indicated their support for the EPF, is linking final approval of this funding to passage of several unrelated budget items, such as property tax relief. As of the time of writing this article, the EPF for Fiscal Year '06-07 has still not been approved.

EPF Snapshot: here are some of the highlights of the Governors resubmitted \$200 million EPF

Program Increases

- \$50 million for land acquisition projects (up from \$40 million),
- \$23 million for farmland protection (up from \$16 million),
- \$1.5 million for the Biodiversity Research Institute (up from \$1 million)

New Categories

The expanded funding also supported the addition of new EPF categories,

- \$3.250 million for Invasive Species (including \$250,000 for Lake George)
- \$3 million for an Ocean and Great Lakes Initiative
- \$6.250 million for a Water Quality Improvement Program.

Delaying EPF approval puts at immediate risk programs and projects that protect our land, water and air, our health and the health of future New Yorkers by cutting funding to zero, and should not be held up because of disagreements on other unrelated issues. You can help see EPF - con't. col. 2

TOBAGO by Rosemary Pusateri

Perhaps you know already. As newcomers to birding, we didn't know before we went: The southern Caribbean island of Tobago is wonderful for birders. My husband Frank and I discovered this one day in January of 2006.

Located just off the coast of Venezuela, Tobago, a very green, laid back West Indies isle of volcanic origins, is not visited by many cruise ships. The Wind Surf anchors for the day at Tobago, once a fortnight. We were aboard in January.

I was not thinking about birds when the ship's tender took Frank, me, and our snorkel gear ashore, or when we found a taxi to our beach destination. The friendly man driving our taxi was thinking about birds. Prince Edward, and that is the name he gave us, stopped his vehicle to point out a Rufous-vented Chachalaca on a branch.

That was my first clue that Tobago might be a birding destination. The second was noticing a bird chart and flyers for birding tours in the open air "lobby" of the Blue Waters Inn. This rustic, West Indies-style resort (www.bluewatersinn.com for more information) seems to cater to folks who enjoy seeing birds as well as what's in the sea. Even the outdoor restaurant overlooking the beach and Batteaux Bay is a fine station for bird watching.

The same glass-bottomed boats took swimmers out to the vibrant reef near Little Tobago Island for a many-splendored drift snorkel, and took birders with all their paraphernalia along the verdant, steep coastline for some serious birding.

I wish I could have done both that day. Despite being submerged a lot, I added four birds to my life list. There were several Rufous-vented Chachalacas on the ground, actually the sandy beach, at the Blue Waters Inn. I saw some Ruddy Turnstones closer to the waves, and one Brown Booby flying low over water. That's three.

On our return taxi ride, Prince Edward stopped to show us a Yellow-breasted Kingbird in the trees.

That is four new birds without trying, in one day on Tobago.

*Editor's note: See also "Tobago - If You Go" on pg. 6



EPF - con't. from col. 1

to make sure that this does not happen by writing to your State Senator and Assembly Member today urging their immediate approval of the \$200 million EPF. This future of this important funding depends on your action now! To learn more visit ny.audubon.org, or contact me at smahar@audubon.org

Audubon and Bird Flu

-Information from the Audubon New York website



Avian influenza (bird flu) is becoming a significant concern for many people, and there is potential for misinformation to spread. People are concerned about their health and their families' health, the possibility of a repeat of the 1918 flu that killed 50 million people worldwide, whether they might contract bird flu from wild or domestic birds, and the spread of the disease in wild birds. Audubon has a responsibility to provide information about this disease as it concerns birds and people's interactions with them.

Main points regarding bird flu and wild birds in North America

- To the best of our knowledge, infection of humans from H5N1 so far has only been found to be from infected domestic birds, not infected wild birds. To date there have been no known cases of H5N1 in humans as a result of contact with wild birds.
- The form of H5N1 that is deadly to chickens and waterfowl has not been found yet in North or South America (as of March 20, 2006)
- There is no evidence of danger of catching H5N1 from bird feeders.
- Bird feeders and birdbaths should be cleaned monthly with a weak bleach solution or soap and water to prevent transmission of other diseases among birds.
- There is no danger of contracting H5N1 from birding.
- Only authorized persons trained in handling sick or dead wildlife should pick up dead or sick animals, including birds.
- Bird hunters should not fear H5N1, so long as they take proper precautions when handling and preparing dead birds. The USGS has a fact sheet on this subject, aimed primarily at hunters and researchers.
- When handling live wild birds, staff and volunteers should wear latex or rubber gloves, wash hands and equipment thoroughly, and not eat, drink or smoke while handling birds.
- Birds die from a variety of reasons, including West Nile Virus, multiple other diseases, attacks by other animals, flying into buildings, etc. Reporting all dead birds could overwhelm the testing capacity of state agencies and interfere with detecting real bird flu related deaths. Any large die-offs of birds, or the occurrence of individual dead birds in either a short period of time or at the same location, should be reported to the nearest regional office of the Department of Environmental Conservation.
- While the killing of domestic flocks infected with H5N1 can be an effective means of stopping or slowing the spread of the disease, killing wild birds is not considered to be an effective means of disease control.
- If the highly pathogenic form of H5N1 shows up in North America, measures to protect domestic flocks will have to be taken, such as isolating them from any contact with wild birds.
- If highly pathogenic H5N1 does show up in North America, that is not the same as a flu pandemic - people should not panic or change their daily activities as a result.

This is an evolving issue, with new information available weekly. Audubon New York will provide current information and links to current information on our web page at <http://ny.audubon.org>. Please also visit the webpage for a more in-depth explanation of issues regarding bird flu and an extensive list of web resources for further information.

Tobago – If You Go...

-Rosemary Pusateri

Tobago is the more unspoiled, less densely populated island of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (for more information www.tobagoguide.com and www.simplytobago.com/tobagobirdwatching.asp). The national bird is the Scarlet Ibis. Both islands attract serious birders, with over 400 bird species. From what I have read, populous Trinidad actually has more bird species than Tobago.

Tobago's Crown Point International Airport is served by several airlines and there is a direct flight from JFK to Trinidad on British West Indies Air, more familiarly called Bee-Wee. I have flown Bee-Wee on that route, and I found it is not like our airlines; it is flying with a Caribbean flavor—sometimes charming, sometimes frustrating, relaxed in attitude, and not always efficient.

Frank and I had an unusual experience with BWIA in 2005, waiting for a flight to JFK, when we were stranded for two days in Barbados due to a blizzard in New York. I am not suggesting Bee-Wee could have controlled the weather, however, the airline personnel caused inconvenience for us and themselves by notifying stranded passengers to check out of our rooms and come to the airport for a flight that ended up being delayed from Trinidad for almost seven more hours. After much waiting, and with a couple trips to and from the airport, dealing with Barbados Immigration for a third time that day was a trial. Eventually, we found ourselves on a crowded, shabby, old plane and together, we endured a long night's flight to JFK.

There do not appear to be any ferries from other Caribbean islands.

The Wind Surf (www.windstarcruises.com for more information) will continue to visit Tobago next winter. I could find no cruise ship anchoring or stopping at Tobago's Scarborough cruise ship facility next winter. Perhaps that will change; I suggest looking at cruises departing from Barbados.

Editor's Ramblings

The pages are packed this issue and there is no room for my usual ramblings! A few important messages...



I'm looking for someone to write book reviews on natural history subjects. One or two a year would be a great help and I know the readers would be appreciative – as would I! Please contact me if you are interested in helping the chapter in this way.

SAAS has created a Junior Birder program for children who have an interest in birds and would like something fun and educational to keep them busy this summer. Contact any board member or officer for information.

We've made every effort to make this issue an enjoyable one with which to begin your summer. The variety of material should ensure something to interest each member!

As our lives seem to become more and more complex, it is easy to let days go by without spending time in the natural world. Take a vow right now to allow yourself time each week to pursue the interest you have in the natural world – you'll be a happier and more peaceful person for your effort.

-Mona Bearor

Peregrine Falcons Nesting in Glens Falls!

Thanks to SAAS member, Paul Saffold, volunteer falcon observer for NYS DEC, we are pleased to let you know that Peregrine Falcons are nesting in Glens Falls again this year. Unlike last year, this year they have nested on Prospect St. where it is possible to watch the progress! In an active quarry and protected by a chain link fence and steep quarry walls, the peregrines are brooding 4 rusty colored eggs – soon to hatch by Paul's calculations.

There is a good spot to view the nest but it is on private property. Paul has arranged with the landowner to allow us access to view the nest with the following restrictions:

Prospect St. has a lot of truck traffic during the Mon-Sat work week. We have permission to view the birds **ONLY ON SUNDAYS**. Please respect the owner's wishes. Also, DO NOT park on the west side of Prospect (that would be the right side after turning from Warren Street) - there are workers who drive in and out on Sundays. *See below for recommended parking*

The viewing area is on the left side of Prospect, 1 1/2 blocks after turning south off Warren St. There is a chain link fence with several signs on it. One of the signs is an old rusty color with no words - that is a good spot see *Peregrine* - con't on page 7

SAAS Summer 2006 Field Trips

Introducing our Trip Leaders...

Andrea Bello: Andrea is new to SAAS and is as enthusiastic about leading Discovery Hikes for us as we are to have her a part of our chapter! Andrea's bio says it all...

"Andrea Bello is a recently converted "nature nerd". Working with young children, passionate volunteers and wonderful educators at the Jamestown Audubon Society gave her an opportunity to really delve into nature study. She grew up in Argyle and spent much of her time wandering the fields and streams around her home. Weekends were spent at her family's camp at Saranac Lake, where her true appreciation of the natural world began.

Andrea currently lives in Argyle with her two cats, and is employed by the Moreau Community Center, Inc. in South Glens Falls. She believes that mud pies and soaking wet shoes are an essential part of learning to appreciate nature and then understand it. The experiences of dancing in a rainstorm, catching snowflakes on your tongue and squishing bare toes in the mud are not limited to children. The inner child of everyone should get dirty, build forts and absorb nature through their very skin just by being in it. Then you can focus on watching birds or catching salamanders." It will be impossible to spend time with her and not "catch the fever!"

Drew Monthie: We were pleased when Drew Monthie offered to lead a walk for us. Many of you are familiar with Drew's work locally as an ecologist, native plant garden designer and plant historian. He holds an AAS in Plant Science/Horticulture and a BS in Ecology, operates a local business, Ecologic Consulting – www.ecologicconsulting.net and is the plant historian for the Fort House Museum in Fort Edward. In his "spare time" Drew lectures at local garden symposiums and volunteers in local public gardens. Drew is passionate about both plants and the environment – just the right combination to lead each of us to a better understanding of plants in our area.

The Schedule:

- June 18 Plant Discovery Walk at Cole's Woods with Drew Monthie
Meet at 1pm the parking lot on the corner of Fire Rd and Parkview
- June 24 Discovery Hike at Carter Pond with Andrea Bello
Meet at 9am at the parking lot near the trailhead; Rte.40 to Rte.338 in South Argyle, follow Rte. 338 past the Cossayuna Post Office and south to the second parking area on the left.
- July 22 Discovery Hike at Betar Byway in South Glens Falls with Andrea Bello
Meet at 8am at the parking lot at the end of First St; turn west side from Rt9 in SGF

You may want to bring field guides, insect repellent, water... you'll surely want to bring your enthusiasm!

SAAS is pleased that we can once again offer field trips to our members. If you have a special interest, such as butterflies, wildflowers, etc., please contact a board member or officer and we will attempt to arrange a field trip specific to that interest. We'd like to cater to our members interests and we can only do that if you let us know what natural history subjects appeal to you.

Peregrine - con't. from page 6

to look through the fence. The nest is almost straight across from that spot but lower than half way down the opposite quarry wall. Look in the light gray rock under a small overhand for the stick nest. Please use good birder etiquette at all times.

*A good place to park is in a small parking area near an abandoned building on the left side of Prospect immediately after turning from Warren. Another good spot to park is on Warren Street which is a very short walk from the viewing area.

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2005-2008

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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" 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 Barb at 518-792-7542 before sending material.

The Fledgling



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Vol. 23 No. 4 – Summer 2006

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Glens Falls, NY
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