



The Fledgling

Newsletter of the Southern Adirondack Audubon Society, Inc.

Vol. 33 No. 1, September - November 2015

Visit SAAS at: <http://www.southernadirondackaudubon.org>

This newsletter is in color online!

Fall programs feature local fauna

Rehabbed raptors, animals in winter and stunning photographs of local birds will be featured in SAAS's fall monthly programs.

Programs are held at 7 p.m. in the Christine L. McDonald Community Room on the lower level of Crandall Library in downtown Glens Falls. The events are free to the public.

Wildlife rehabilitator Nancy Kimball will present **"Raptors of the Adirondacks"** on **Wednesday, Sept. 23**, for a joint monthly program of SAAS and the Glens Falls-Saratoga Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club.

Nancy Kimball, a Diamond Point resident, is a wildlife rehabilitator with both New York State and federal licenses.

She recently published a book, *Possums to Porcupines: the Wild Life of an Adirondack Rehabilitator*, about her experiences caring for orphaned and injured mammals, songbirds and raptors for the last 14 years.

She is a founding member of North Country Wild Care (NCWC), a non-profit network of home-based wildlife rehabilitators. She belongs to the New York State Wildlife Rehabilitation Council and the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association.

Kimball gives educational programs

for all age groups with her non-releasable raptors, including owls, Red-tailed Hawk and American Kestrel, all native to northern New York.

Her presentation includes the story of each bird as well as its unique characteristics and role in the ecosystem of this area.

If you'd like to bring an item to donate to NCWC, see their wish list on page 2 of this newsletter.

Naturalist Peter Olesheski will present **"Ready or Not: How Animals Prepare for Winter"** on **Wednesday, Oct. 28**.

As winter approaches, local wildlife prepare for the upcoming changes in different ways, Olesheski said. From mammals and birds to reptiles and amphibians, this presentation will explore animal survival methods including migration, hibernation, adaptation and dormancy. Using taxidermy mounts of wildlife species, furs, feathers and other specimens, Olesheski will shed some light on these animal behaviors.

Peter Olesheski, a Johnsburg resident, is the Senior Naturalist at Up



In September, Nancy Kimball will talk about rehabilitating raptors, such as this Barred Owl. She will bring live birds to the program.

Yonda Farm in Bolton Landing, where he has been an environmental educator since 2001.

"My goal as an educator is to foster a love and appreciation for the natural world in every person that I meet or present for, especially young children who represent the next generation of environmental stewards," he said.

Reknowned area photographer Gordon Ellmers will present **"Wild Birds Through the Seasons"** on **Wednesday, Nov. 18**.

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This newsletter is printed on
recycled paper.

Southern Adirondack Audubon Society Board and Committees

<http://www.southernadirondackaudubon.org>

Email: info@southernadirondackaudubon.org

Officers:

President: Pat Fitzgerald (518-792-6846)
fitzgeraldsaas@yahoo.com
Vice-President: OPEN
Secretary: Linda Hoyt (518-494-2380)
Treasurer: Mona Bearor (518-745-8637)

Board of Directors:

2012-2015	Jason Goldsmith Joyce Miller Carol Moyer
2013-2016	Jim Campinell Jim Reis OPEN
2014-2017	Barbara Beatty OPEN OPEN

Board meetings are held monthly except July and August. Members are invited to attend. Contact Pat Fitzgerald for details.

Committees:

Newsletter: Joyce Miller (editor@southernadirondackaudubon.org)
Education: Mona Bearor (518-745-8637)
Publicity: Carol Moyer (518-793-1960)
Conservation: Jason Goldsmith (518-480-4243)
Membership: Barbara Beatty (518-793-1454)

Southern Adirondack Audubon Society (SAAS) is a certified local chapter of the National Audubon Society. The organization's primary goal is to protect the environment by preserving natural habitats and promoting environmental education. The group has more than 450 members in Warren, Washington, and northern Saratoga counties in New York State.

North Country Wild Care Wish List items sought

Nancy Kimball will talk about the raptor rehabilitation efforts of North Country Wild Care at the SAAS program in September.

Those attending the program are invited to bring any items on this wish list. Some of the supplies will be used for the group's new rehabilitators who need to "gear up."

NCWC would appreciate donations of the following items:

- linoleum, tile board or similar material for cage bottoms (easy to clean)
- chain link fencing/enclosures
- dog houses
- scales: postage, produce, etc.
- hardware cloth or tight mesh fencing (1" x 2" or smaller)
- leather gloves, welding gloves, police gloves, talon gloves, surgical gloves, butcher gloves
- heating pads
- small incubators, mammal or baby incubators
- cages, carriers and other pet supplies
- pet food, dry or canned
- canned baby food
- soft baby receiving blankets
- Pedialyte, plain or flavored
- children's toys and small playground equipment
- plastic children's pools (no holes)
- projector and laptop computer to provide wildlife education.

People may also contact NCWC directly at info@northcountrywildcare.org to arrange to donate supplies.

SAAS board positions open

Several positions are open on the Board of Directors of the Southern Adirondack Audubon Society. The terms of the President, Treasurer and Program Committee chair are expiring. The board will also need a Vice-president.

Monthly board meetings are held at Crandall Library in downtown Glens Falls on Sundays afternoons. Upcoming board meeting dates are September 20, October 25 and November 15, at Crandall Library in Glens Falls. Interested members are welcomed to attend.

Please join us and help your chapter thrive! Contact SAAS Board President Pat Fitzgerald for more information.

President's Message

National Audubon Conference recap

By Pat Fitzgerald, SAAS President

In July, I had the privilege of representing Southern Adirondack Audubon Society at the National Audubon Society's convention in Leesburg, Virginia. More than 360 Audubon enthusiasts from the United States, Canada, Belize and the Caribbean attended. It was an inspirational event with excellent sessions and speakers to instruct, motivate, and encourage participants to continue bringing the message and mission of Audubon to our local communities.

Over the next few months, I will focus my attention on building our volunteer base and soliciting people to help our chapter become stronger and enduring.

One misconception that many people have is that in order to volunteer for Audubon, or serve on the Audubon Board of Directors, you have to be an excellent birder. While we do need birders and are always happy to have birders join us, especially as field trip leaders, there are several other ways to be a part of the local chapter. Our goal is to promote appreciation and restoration of natural ecosystems

focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of Earth's biological diversity. Conservation is our greatest concern. Time, willingness, and dedication are the only necessary qualifications needed to work with us.

If you have any interest in volunteering, feel free to contact us through our website, e-mail, or by calling any one of our board members listed in this newsletter. Your talents will help strengthen and expand Southern Adirondack Audubon Society.

I hope you will consider joining us, like Lori Barber recently did. Lori lives in Lake George and has volunteered to serve on our Board of Directors.

Print issues ending

The December issue of *The Fledgling* will be our last print edition that is mailed to all members.

Chapter Supporters who would like to continue receiving a printed copy will need to let us know when you renew your membership, or by contacting us directly.

If you are receiving the newsletter because you are a National Audubon Society member, you can continue to receive a printed copy by becoming a

Chapter Supporter for only \$10 a year. Use the membership form on our website, <http://www.southernadiron->

dackaudubon.org/membership/membership.html. Or, send a check, made out to Southern Adirondack Audubon Society, to Barbara Beatty, 6 Meldon Circle, Queensbury, N.Y. 12804. Please indicate that you would like to receive the newsletter by mail.

Membership News

Welcome, new members!

Thank you to our newest chapter supporters:

*Mary Anna O'Donnell, Saratoga Springs
George Patrick, Queensbury
Jonathan Albrecht, Round Lake
Gregory Hamlin, Aventura, FL
Cory Ward, Saratoga Springs
Jay Paranjpe, Queensbury
James Grinter, Queensbury
Jean Marie Crocker, Wilton*

Currently, 512 members of National Audubon live in our chapter area. Many of our 125 chapter supporters belong to the National Audubon Society and also financially support our local efforts of conservation and education.

Membership as a "Chapter Supporter" is only \$10 annually. All dues are used locally to support chapter activities, local conservation issues, monthly programs, and field trips. You will also receive four issues of *The Fledgling* newsletter. All of our staff are volunteers and all of our regular programs and field trips are free and open to the public.

Make your check payable to "Southern Adirondack Audubon Society" and send with name, address, and phone number to: Barbara Beatty, 6 Meldon Circle, Queensbury, N.Y., 12804.



The New York contingent to the National Audubon conference included SAAS President Pat Fitzgerald, far right, next to Audubon New York's Laura McCarthy, in blue. John Loz, on the left in the last row, is a SAAS member as well as president of the Audubon Society of the Capital Region. More than 360 people attended the event in Virginia in July.

Species Spotlight

Enjoying Cedar Waxwings

By Joyce Miller, Newsletter Editor

Most people gasp at their first close look at a Cedar Waxwing. A Cedar Waxwing is sleek and handsome, with a smooth crest, black bandit mask, silky body feathers blending from tawny to yellow and gray, bright red wax-like knobs on its wings, and a yellow tail tip.

Cedar Waxwings are common and easily found by listening for their high thin *tseet* whistle. They are usually in flocks: it's rare to see just one. They are often observed in parking lots eating fruit in ornamental trees, and over water, catching insects. They can become tipsy from eating fermented fruit.

Most have bright yellow tail tips, but you may spot one with orange tail tips. This is likely caused by eating berries from introduced honeysuckle species when their tail feathers were developing.

According to Cornell's *All About Birds* website, homeowners can attract them by planting dogwood, serviceberry, cedar, juniper, hawthorn and winterberry. Waxwings will also devour strawberries, mulberry, raspberries, blueberries and mountain ash berries. Sometimes, they pass along a berry or insect down a perched row of birds until one of them gulps it down.

Banded Cedar Waxwings have been recaptured that were seven years old. Older birds have larger wax-like drops on their wings. Populations have been stable and may be increasing.

They are found year-round throughout the northern half of United States. They are facultative migrants, migrating south in the winter only if they need to. They can spend summer as far north as southern



This Cedar Waxwing was photographed in June by Don Polunci at the heron rookery in East Greenwich, Washington County.

Canada and winter as far south as southern Central America. Their burlier, grayer northern cousins, Bohemian Waxwings, can irrupt into the northeastern United States in the winter.

For more about Cedar Waxwings, see: http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Cedar_Waxwing/id. That All About Birds page also links to current sightings on the online checklist site *eBird* at <http://ebird.org>.

Birding by the Month **Migration starts**

By Mona Bearor, Education Chair

Watch for these bird activities in upcoming months:

September

- Blackbirds, cowbirds, and starlings form huge flocks and perform aerial ballets.
- Look for nighthawks at dusk as they forage for insects on the wing.
- Flooded or plowed fields can reveal migrating shorebirds that have stopped to rest and refuel.

October

- Thrushes and sparrows move through the area on their way south to wintering grounds.

- Check large bodies of water for migrating ducks, loons, grebes, and geese.
- Check shrubby areas near water for lingering warblers.

November

- Keep your eyes on the skies for kettles of raptors and vultures on the move!
- It's not too early for the return of wintering owls and raptors to the grasslands.
- American Tree Sparrow, Northern Shrike, and Dark-eyed Junco return from their breeding grounds.

Towpath Road bird list is growing

Mona Bearor offers this report from the Towpath Road in Fort Edward on July 18:

"While walking my dog, I heard a low short rattling vocalization and looked up expecting to see a Common Raven. Instead, I was very surprised to view three Sandhill Cranes flying overhead! They were heading east-northeast. By the time I got back to the car, they were out of sight." Sandhill Cranes sighting are rare in the northeastern United States. They are more common in the midwest and west, and impressive because of their size.

These bring the total species for that road to 140. Towpath Road is located along the old Champlain Canal in the town of Kingsbury. Nearby New Swamp Road now has 88 species. A visit to that area is always worthwhile, Mona reports.

Mona maintains directions to these hotspots as well as a species list on the *Birding* page of the SAAS website: <http://southernadironackaudubon.org/birding/birding.html>.



Gordon Ellmers photographed this Snowy Owl near Simeon Hundson's horse farm near Route 197 and Plum Road in Fort Edward. Dr. Ellmers will show this and other photos of local birds at his program in November.

Fall programs

Continued from Page 1

Dr. Ellmers' program is organized by season and shows a variety of bird species that breed in upstate New York as well as those that migrate through.

Gordon Ellmers, a resident of Fort Edward, is a practicing veterinarian. He is an amateur wildlife photographer specializing in wild birds in their natural habitat. He started by photographing some of the beautiful birds on his property. Most of his photographs are taken locally.

Ellmers photographs wild birds and wildlife every day of the year. His wildlife photography has been featured in a number of newspapers and websites as well as *The New York State Conservationist* magazine. Many of his photos have been donated to a number of institutions and organizations including Friends of the IBA, Trinity College, Michigan State University,



Oberlin College, Shenendehowa Central School District, Queensbury School District and Wiawaka. He is a member of the National Audubon Society and Southern Adirondack Audubon Society.

Please avoid wearing fragranced products to prevent triggering allergies, asthma and migraines in others attending the event.

SAAS surveys Mt. McGregor site

Members of Southern Adirondack Audubon and Audubon Society of the Capital Region completed a bird survey this summer on a portion of the former Mt. McGregor prison lands. Part of the property surrounding the former prison is being added to Moreau Lake State Park.

The first bird the group spotted was a Common Loon on Lake Bonita—a promising start! The group saw or heard a total of 27 species, including five warbler species, three flycatchers and three thrush species. They also saw many beautiful wildflowers and fungi.

In May, the N. Y. S. Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation announced that 750 acres of the former Mount McGregor State Correctional Facility property will be transferred to Moreau Lake State Park. The property is located in the towns of Corinth, Wilton and Moreau in Saratoga County. The land includes forests, wetlands and the shores of undeveloped Lake Bonita.

The Saratoga-Capital District Park Region is working on a plan to develop a multiple-use trail for non-motorized vehicles from Moreau Lake State Park with Saratoga Spa State Park. Hiking trails and access to Lake Bonita are planned, according to a press release from N. Y. S. Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The public will be able to provide comments on recreational access to the new parkland. A map of the McGregor Parcel and Moreau Lake State Park is available at <http://nysparks.com/parks/attachments/MoreauLakeMoreauLakeStateParkMcGregorParcel.pdf>.

Moreau Lake State Park is a 4,531-acre park visited by almost 400,000 people each year.

Crown Point Banding reports

The Crown Point Banding Station in Essex County, N.Y., completed its 40th season at the Crown Point State Historic Site on Lake Champlain. Established in 1976 by J.M.C. "Mike" Peterson, volunteers at the banding station monitor spring migrants for two weeks in mid-May as birds fly north to their breeding areas.

Here are some highlights of the Crown Point Banding Association's June 2015 report:

- The station was open May 8 to 23. Plans call for it to be open May 6 to 22 in 2016.
- In 2015, 672 birds from 58 species were banded; 15 were warbler species. In 2014, 558 birds were banded from 61 species. More than 17,000 birds from 106 bird species have been banded since 1976.
- The highest daily number was May 11, when 120 birds were banded.
- Nineteen birds captured this year had been banded in previous years.
- A 10-year-old male Baltimore Oriole was recaptured again this year; it has been recaptured in previous years. (The oldest known Baltimore Oriole was 12 years old.)
- Seven licensed banders assisted in the project this year.
- More than 275 people and five

school groups visited the station.

- Among the most-often captured birds in 2015 were:
 - Yellow-rumped Warbler - 251
 - Cape May Warbler - 36
 - American Goldfinch - 25
 - Common Yellowthroat - 23
 - White-crowned Sparrow - 20
 - Baltimore Oriole - 19
 - Yellow Warbler - 13

People who would like to learn how to take birds from a net, or would like to become a bander, can contact Gordon Howard at ghoward@aaaahawk.com.

Test-drive Merlin Photo ID software

Many birders use Cornell Lab of Ornithology's **Merlin Bird ID** app on their smartphones. The app provides in-the-field identification help for birders.

The user answers five basic questions (location, date, size, color, activity) about a bird sighting. Merlin presents a list of possible matches from North America's 400 most common birds. A web-based version to use on computers is being developed but not yet available.

Merlin is now offering a new service for birders to test: **Merlin Bird Photo ID**. It analyzes features of a bird photo and attempts to identify

the bird. It is currently available for user on computers, but not yet for mobile devices.

To try it out, a user goes to the **Merlin Bird Photo ID** website, uploads a photo of a bird, then clicks on the bird's bill tip, eye and tail tip as prompted. The software analyzes the data and presents a list of possible matching species from among 400 North American species. See <http://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/about-merlin-photo-id/> for details.

Each submitted photo adds to the accuracy of the software. The Photo ID software was developed through a partnership between Cornell Tech, Caltech and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Give a gift membership

Do you know a family member, friend, teacher or other deserving person who would enjoy becoming a Southern Adirondack Audubon Chapter Supporter?

Gift memberships are available. It's easy to do: just print out the SAAS Chapter Supporter form on the SAAS Membership page (<http://www.southernadirondackaudubon.org/membership/membership.html>), by Mail it with \$10 payment to Barbara Beatty, 6 Meldon Circle, Queensbury, N.Y. 12804. We will send a gift card at your request.

All members will receive Southern Adirondack Audubon's quarterly newsletter, *The Fledgling*, in electronic form. Annual dues stay in this area and help support the monthly public programs, this newsletter, and other educational programs.

Chapter Outreach— Chapter supporter Jeanne Polunci and Chapter President Pat Fitzgerald hand out information at the Saratoga Springs Farmers' Market in June.



Field Trips and Events

September to December

- Cut and save this page! -

For details and updates, visit the SAAS page:

<http://southernadirondackaudubon.org/fieldtrips/fieldtrips.html>

Friday, September 4: Birding Walk along the Betar Byway, South Glens Falls

Birding walks will be led by members of Southern Adirondack Audubon, weather permitting. Walks will last about one and a half hours. Meet at 9 a.m. at the gazebo near the parking lot at the end of First Street in South Glens Falls. This is a leisurely, easy walk. Call Pat at 792-6846 for more information. No advance registration is required.

Saturday, Sept. 26: Moreau Lake State Park Nature Festival

The Moreau Lake State Park Nature Festival will be held Saturday, September 26th from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. There will be many activities for children such as: bird house building, pumpkin painting, and face painting. There will also be a bake sale and a silent auction. The park also offers a nature center and many hiking trails to enjoy. This event is free to the public and offers a wide variety of entertainment.

Friday, October 2: Birding Walk along the Betar Byway, South Glens Falls

Birding walks will be led by members of Southern Adirondack Audubon, weather permitting. Walks will last about one and a half hours. Meet at 9 a.m. at the gazebo near the parking lot at the end of First Street in South Glens Falls. This is a leisurely, easy walk. Call Pat at 792-6846 for more information. No advance registration is required.

Monthly Programs for Fall

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- Naturalist Peter Olesheski will present **"Ready or Not: How Animals Prepare for Winter"** on **Wednesday, Oct. 28.**
- Renowned local photographer Dr. Gordon Ellmers will present **"Wild Birds Through the Seasons"** on **Wednesday, Nov. 18.**

Social Media Intern sought

Southern Adirondack Audubon Society seeks a Social Media Intern. The intern will establish and maintain a Twitter account, establish an e-mail list for the hundreds of Audubon members in our area, and help maintain and update the Southern Adirondack Audubon Facebook page. The intern will also have an opportunity to learn the ArcGIS Audubon mapping system.

The intern must be willing to attend Southern Adirondack Audubon Board of Directors' meetings throughout the internship and must submit a report of accomplished work to the board each month throughout the duration of the internship, September through May.

More information and the application form can be found on our website: <http://www.southernadirondackaudubon.org>.



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Queensbury, NY 12804

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NYSOA meets in Albany Oct. 2-4

Registration is underway for the New State York Birders Conference and N.Y.S. Ornithological Association (NYSOA) 68th Annual Meeting in Albany, October 2 to 4. It is hosted by Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club.

The weekend includes a keynote address by Jon Dunn, noted birding tour leader and author, behind the scenes tours of the ornithology collection at the NYS Museum, book signings, field trips, workshops, papers, and more. Details are posted on <http://www.nybirds.org>.

The state conference was last held in Albany in 2005.

Adirondack Loon event set for Oct. 11

The third annual Adirondack Loon Celebration will be held on Sunday, October 11, at the Lake Placid Center for the Arts.

Among the events planned are:

- A loon natural history and conservation presentation
- Ventriloquist and puppeteer Sylvia Fletcher
- Loon-related silent auction and art and photo show



Common Loon, July 2011, Photo credit: John Picken of Chicago, Wikimedia Commons.

- A field trip to observe loon behavior. (There is a fee; pre-register by October 7; contact adkloon@briloon.org or 888-749-5666 x 145.)
- Adirondack Loon Quilt Raffle (tickets can be downloaded and sent in)
- The Adirondack Interpretive Center's little rubber loons will be available for purchase.

For details, see <http://www.briloon.org/adkloon>.