



The Fledgling

Newsletter of the Southern Adirondack Audubon Society, Inc. (SAAS)

Vol. 38 No. 4, September - November 2021

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SouthernAdirondackAudubonSociety/>

Website: <http://www.southernadirondackaudubon.org>



New York State Ornithological Association 74th Annual Meeting

SAAS hosts NYSOA conference, Oct. 1-2

Our chapter is hosting the 74th annual meeting of the New York State Ornithological Association (NYSOA). Events will be held online on Friday, Oct. 1 and Saturday, Oct. 2.

Sessions are free to attend online through **Zoom**. Attendees must register in advance to receive log-in details for the sessions, at <https://nybirds.org/>.

On **Friday, October 1** at 7:00 p.m., keynote speaker Dr. Jason Hill will talk about **"The Effects**

of Climate Change on Montane Birds of the Northeast." He'll offer the latest information on his montane bird research.

Hill is the conservation biologist and quantitative ecologist with the Vermont Center for Ecostudies, based in Norwich, Vermont. He oversees the annual Mountain Birdwatch citizen science effort.

In his talk, he'll examine the future of montane bird populations over the next 100 years in the northeastern U.S., and dive into a decade of community science data from Mountain Birdwatch to look at rates of elevational and latitudinal shifts.



"Climate change is causing mountains to warm twice as fast as the rest of the world, and mountaintops perhaps at five times the global rate," Hill said. Montane plant and animal species are shifting to higher elevations. In the Northeast, models predict that more than half of spruce-fir forests will be lost in the next two centuries. That will affect the breeding birds in those habitats.

Left: Dr. Jason Hill, in the field with students, holding a male Bobolink. (Photo courtesy of Dr. Hill.)

SAAS's fall programs are a mix of Zoom and in-person events. See article below for registration details.

Oct. 1-2—NYSOA conference sessions by Zoom; register in advance.

- Friday, Oct. 1, 7 p.m.: Dr. Jason Hill talk on montane bird species;
- Saturday, Oct. 2, 9 a.m.: virtual tour of historic home of conservationist Paul Schaefer.

Friday, Oct. 9 — Talks at 1 and 4 p.m. with book signing by author Jim Paruk, on *Loon Lessons: Uncommon Encounters with the Great Northern Diver*, at Bolton Free Library, Bolton Landing.

Wednesday, Oct. 27 at 7 p.m.—"Time to Fly," on fall migration, by "Bird Diva" Bridget Butler, by Zoom through Saratoga Springs Public Library, register in advance.

Saturday, Sept. 11— Hawk Watch Festival, Voorheesville; see page 6.

An Iowa native, Hill graduated from the University of Montana with a degree in Wildlife Biology. He researched Saltmarsh Sparrow behavior at the University of Connecticut for his master's in Ecology and completed his Ph.D. in Ecology through Pennsylvania State University. His research has taken him to Florida, California, Hawaii and Costa Rica. He joined VCE in 2015.

He is currently researching the effects of utility line rights-of-way on pollinators such as bumblebees and monarch butterflies.

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Southern Adirondack Audubon Society

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www.southernadirondackaudubon.org](http://www.southernadirondackaudubon.org)

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Board and Committees

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Board meetings are held monthly except July, August and December. Members are invited to attend. Contact John Loz for details.

Committees:

Conservation: OPEN

Education: OPEN

Membership Secretary: Lori Barber
(membership@southernadirondackaudubon.org)

Newsletter: Joyce Miller
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Programs: John Loz (Interim chair)
(programs@southernadirondackaudubon.org)

Publicity: OPEN

Southern Adirondack Audubon Society (SAAS) is a certified local chapter of the National Audubon Society. SAAS has approximately 600 members in Warren, Washington, northern Saratoga and southern Hamilton counties in New York State.

SAAS's primary goal is to protect the environment by preserving natural habitats and promoting environmental education. Contact a board member to learn about SAAS volunteer opportunities.

President's Message

NYSOA, Birdability, Fall programs

By John Loz, SAAS President

Happy Autumn! I hope you all have had a better summer this year than we did in 2020 and that you are geared up to enjoy this fall season.

I, along with our board, take the summer off from our monthly board meetings to not only get a rest, but to work on projects over the warm summer season. Members have installed a native plant garden, performed weekly and seasonal bird surveys in partnership with New York State Parks, worked with Amorak Youth (<https://www.amorakyouth.org/>) to donate educational bird materials, continued to research a bird tracking project, and met with the Mayor of Ballston Spa and officials at the Warren County Municipal Center to see how we can turn 50% of that green lawn into grassland bird habitat and native plant gardens. Our chapter's Budget Committee met to plan out our funds for the 2021-2022 season, our webmaster has nearly put the finishing touches on our new website, and we have started to do in-person outreach again to connect with our communities at farmers' markets, after nearly two years!



I have taken some restful time to get out birding this summer, in between meetings and program planning, including hosting the 2021 virtual New York State Ornithological Association (NYSOA) annual meeting. While exploring new places to bird in our vast Southern Adirondack chapter area, I started documenting places that are accessible to birders with various disabilities. So far, I've documented six locations with accessible trails. I submitted those to a new non-profit called **Birdability** ([https://](https://www.birdability.org/)

www.birdability.org/). Their mission is "that birding truly is for everybody and every body, regardless of disability or other health concerns." If you'd like me to scout out a particular location, email me at president@southernadirondackaudubon.org.

We're planning a few bird walks this autumn. We'll announce details through our email distribution list and Facebook page. We've also booked a couple of virtual presentations for you to enjoy, one free to you through the NYSOA conference we're hosting, and, an in-person presentation and book signing on Common Loons in Bolton Landing. See pages 1 and 3 for details.

I'm particularly excited to announce that we have booked the "Bird Diva" from Vermont, Bridget Butler (<https://www.birddiva.com/>). She'll offer fall and spring presentations as well as a "Slow Birding" bird walk experience in late spring, 2022. More to come on that!

It has been very difficult to predict how to program through this pandemic, and it continues even today with the Delta variant on the rise. We appreciate your patience and understanding while we work to bring you quality, educational presentations during the year. In-person events may change in ways we can't predict on short notice. We'll do our best to announce those changes via our social media and email accounts. We will, finally, get through this.

For now, enjoy the fall colors we love so much around here and the wonders of nature wherever you are right now, and always ... keep looking up.



NYSOA, Fall events

Continued from page 1

On **Saturday, Oct. 2**, at 9:00 a.m., NYSOA is offering a virtual tour on **Zoom** of the former home of Paul Schaefer, a noted Adirondack conservationist who was named one of the top 100 conservationists of all time by the National Audubon Society. The coordinators of the Kelly Adirondack Center in Niskayuna will offer the tour and presentation on his legacy.

A new historic photo exhibit will also be on display within the home, as well as a 14-foot-tall relief map of the Adirondacks. We'll walk the connecting corridor to the modern Adirondack Research Library and gaze out the windows at the center's bird feeding station. The Kelly Center is fortunate to be the trailhead for the 111-acre H. G. Reist Wildlife Sanctuary, stewarded by the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club. This session should take about 40 minutes.

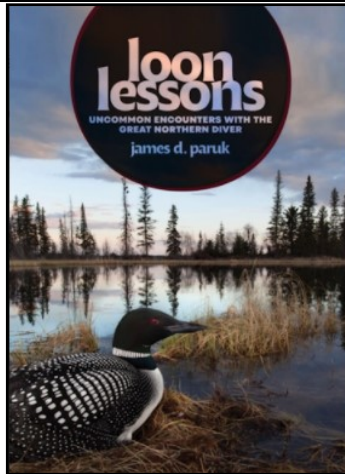
The Delegates' annual business meeting follows at 10 a.m. All individual members of NYSOA are welcome to attend. The meeting concludes around lunchtime.

Click the *Registration* link to register for the Zoom sessions at NYSOA's website (<https://nybirds.org/>).

On **Saturday Oct. 9** at 1 and 4 p.m., Dr. James D. Paruk will discuss and sign copies of his book "**Loon Lessons: Uncommon Encounters with the Great Northern Diver**," on the front lawn of the Bolton Landing Free Library, in downtown Bolton Landing.

His book, published in May, will be for sale. The University of Minnesota Press publication takes an evolutionary approach to understanding their behavior and life history strategy.

Paruk, a Professor of Biology at St. Joseph's College in Maine, has studied Common Loons across North America for the past 28 years. He is a senior scientist at the Biodiversity Research Institute's Loon Center for Conservation, and is considered one



Dr. James Paruk will talk about his new book, Loon Lessons, on Saturday, Oct. 9 at the Bolton Free Library. (Photos courtesy of University of Minnesota Press and St. Joseph's College of Maine websites.)

of the world's experts on this species. He earned a Ph.D. from Idaho State University, an M.S. from Northern Illinois University and B.S. from Lake Superior State University.



On **Wednesday Oct. 27** at 7 p.m., The "Bird Diva," Bridget Butler of Vermont, will offer "**Time to Fly**," a virtual program on fall migration.

It will be offered through Saratoga Springs Public Library's **Zoom** account. Register in advance for this program: <https://sspl.libcal.com/event/7797872>.



Butler will use snippets of fall sounds as well as photographs from regional photographers. From the challenge of identifying fall warblers to laid-back days watching the aerial acrobatics of migrating raptors, there will be plenty of inspiration to keep even the most ardent birder engaged through the change of seasons, she said.

Butler has worked in conservation and environmental education for more than 20 years throughout New England. Through her business Bird Diva Consulting, she travels across Vermont delivering presentations, leading bird outings, and surveying birds for landowners. Butler has worked for the Audubon Society in Vermont, Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts and helped to create Audubon Vermont's Forest Bird Initiative.

Butler's Slow Birding work has been featured on numerous podcasts including the American Birding Podcast, Ray Brown's Talkin' Birds Podcast, and the South Africa podcast



The Birding Life. She lives in St. Albans, Vermont.

Check the SAAS Facebook page or website for details as these events get closer. There will be no November program.

Above: Canada Geese take flight in the fall.

Left: Bridget Butler, the "Bird Diva" will talk about fall migration in a Zoom program on Oct. 27. (Photos courtesy of Bridget Butler.)

Amorak Youth offers nature events in Fort Edward

In July, the group Amorak Youth offered a fun, interactive session to learn about birds during its nature-oriented workshops at Mullen Park, Fort Edward. The Monday series was a collaboration with Fort Edward and Hudson Falls Recreation Departments and the Southern Adirondack Audubon Society (SAAS).

Amorak Youth offers programs for teen and young people in the Fort Edward and Hudson Falls region. Events are facilitated by local pediatrician Dr. Kathy Braico and the Facebook group Adirondack Butterfly Gardening. These programs are designed to bring art, theater, gardening, nature, cooking, and business opportunities to benefit the youth of area communities. See their Facebook page or the Amorak Youth website, <https://www.amorakyouth.org/>, for details.

For the July 19 session, SAAS provided materials for a simple backyard bird bath with a SAAS-created *Birds and You* educational booklet, materials on native plants for birds, "I Bird NY" Beginner Birding brochures and bird species checklists.

Dr. Braico wrote this about the session:

I just wanted to let you know how well the Bird part of our program went on Monday! We had over a dozen kids participate. We talked about different kinds of birds, how birds and people were similar and not, and what birds needed to live.

The kids used tools that represented different kinds of bird beaks (pliers, straw, tweezers, etc.) to pick up "food" items. For instance they tried picking chocolate sprinkles out of sugar with the tweezers to represent how a bird picks up ants from an anthill, and used an adjustable wrench to break seeds like a cardinal might do.

They played "Birdy says" (think Simon Says) to try to walk like a pigeon and penguin, or fly like a hummingbird and soar like an eagle. We listened to bird songs and learned about how a feather works. They played a game where they tried flapping their wings to "fly to school", and then soared there instead, to learn how birds save energy by soaring. We had them catch a ball using only one eye, then both eyes to illustrate what binocular vision was and why raptors had it but songbirds did not.



Above, Dr. Kathy Braico works with children during the Birds and You workshop held by Amorak Youth.

Left, some of the supplies provided by SAAS for the workshop.



The kids tried to make a nest out of cut vines and grass, and learned how hard that was! They made designs using puffy paint to make into decals to put on their windows to keep birds from

flying into them.

The kids received the materials Audubon so graciously donated to us. We told them that if they found 5 of the birds on the bird identification handout this week, we would give them a bird zipper pull to put on their backpacks when they come back next week. We talked about what information the handouts would give them. They will put the birdbaths in their backyards, and we discussed how to keep them clean and change the water frequently. Next session, they may make bird feeders as well.

The kids had amazing fun and are all anxious to come back next week for more! We are so grateful to Audubon for the donation of these materials, and your support and guidance. We hope we can collaborate with you on another program in the future.

Thank you again for your support!

Sincerely,

Kathy Braico
Amorak Youth, www.amorakyouth.org

Edward Jones
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

Production of this issue of *The Fledgling* newsletter is provided by Edward Jones, 34 Congress Street, Suite 102, Saratoga Springs, N.Y.



A Slate-colored Dark-eyed Junco female nibbles on sumac fruit in this photo by local nature photographer Dr. Gordon Ellmers.

[news/dark-eyed-juncos-backyard-gems-come-dazzling-array-colors](https://www.audubon.org/news/dark-eyed-juncos-backyard-gems-come-dazzling-array-colors)).

Four junco species exist in North and Central America. The SAAS group that visited Costa Rica three years ago were treated to the dramatic Volcano Junco, which has fierce-looking golden eyes and a dark face. Yellow-eyed Juncos are found in Mexico and Central America. The Guadalupe Junco, almost extinct, is found on an island west of Baja California.

Interestingly, juncos may be one of the few birds in the world that have an odor, along with Hoatzin, Hoopoe, Kākāpō parrots and Crested Auklets. Evolutionary biologist Danielle Whittaker reported that the bacteria in juncos' preen oil glands give them a musty smell (<https://www.audubon.org/news/cookies-honey-tangerines-manure-these-birds-have-some-strange-scents>). Her research continues on how this chemical communication affects mate selection and recognition ("Bird odour predicts reproductive success," <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0003347213003473>).

The map on this Audubon page shows the change in this bird's range with climate change: <https://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/dark-eyed-junco>.

According to data from the North American Breeding Bird Survey, junco numbers have declined a total of 50% from 1966 to 2015.

To learn more about Dark-eyed Juncos, see this *All About Birds* page from Cornell Lab of Ornithology: https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Dark-eyed_Junco/overview.

Species Spotlight

Dark-eyed Juncos

By Joyce Miller, SAAS Newsletter Editor

With their chubby faces, stubby pink bill and pink feet, the Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*) is a personable and familiar native sparrow in our backyards. As they flit away, the flash of their outer white tail feathers have been compared to cheerleaders' kick-pleated skirts. Their white bellies look like they sat in white paint.

To many, juncos are also a sign of impending winter cold. Juncos surge into backyards and fields in our region in October, gathering under bird feeders to pick up fallen seeds.

In April, they head to forested areas to breed. Juncos are seen in our region year-round, according to eBird reports: https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Dark-eyed_Junco/maps-range.

Dark-eyed Juncos are common across North America, but their appearances vary greatly:

- Eastern North America has "Slate-colored" Dark-eyed Juncos, which look like the birds in Dr. Ellmers' photographs on this page.
- In western North America, the "Oregon" Dark-eyed Juncos have a very dark head and lighter brownish body.
- This article shows the color variations across North America: "Dark-eyed Juncos, Backyard Gems, Come in a Dazzling Array of Colors" (<https://www.audubon.org/>

Dr. Gordon Ellmer's photo shows the dapper gray color of the male Slate-colored Dark-eyed Junco in the eastern United States.



About Wildflowers

Goldenrod

By Diane Collins

Goldenrod (*Solidago* spp.) is a very familiar late-summer composite wildflower with tiny golden blossoms in showy clusters found growing in fields, along roadsides. As American poet Jane Kenyon wrote, "the first yellowing fronds of goldenrod brighten the margins of the woods."

More than 90 species are native to North America, in many different shapes: plumelike and graceful, elm branched, clublike and showy, wandlike and slender, and flat-topped. A variety of common names describe physical traits which help with (difficult) identification including (but far from inclusive) Blue-stemmed goldenrod, Slender Fragrant goldenrod, Hairy goldenrod, Sweet goldenrod, Zigzag goldenrod, and Lance-leaved goldenrod.

Goldenrods have erect stems and leaves that are simple, alternate, entire, or serrate, and often aromatic.

The wildlife partners of goldenrods are many: pollinating insects, leaf-



eating beaver and rabbits, and seed-eating birds such as goldfinch, juncos, and sparrows.

Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778) used the genus name *Solidago* in his 1753 landmark publication *Species Plantarum*, which introduced the accepted usage of binomial nomenclature to greatly simplify previously long and cumbersome plant names.

"Solidago" comes from the Latin word that means "to make whole" or "to heal," a name chosen (probably by Linnaeus) because of its many therapeutic uses. Called "sun medicine" (*gizisomukiki*) by the Chippewas, goldenrods were used to calm stomachs, cure wounds, and to treat tuberculosis, diphtheria, and bronchitis. Native healers used the plant as a steam bath component to steam pain out of an ailing patient. Western settlers made a tea to treat inflammation, kidney stones, arthritis, toothaches and sore throats.

Fall allergies have been mistakenly blamed on this this showy and innocent plant. Goldenrod flowers produce pollen that is mostly too heavy to be windborne. The culprit for "hay fever" sniffles (and worse) is Ragweed. Its inconspicuous flowers bloom at the same time and produce airborne pollen in high numbers.

Wildflower photographer Diane Collins is the author of *Trailside Wildflowers in Cole's Woods*; see <http://www.wildflowersinyourownbackyard.com>. Cole's Woods is located in both the City of Glens Falls and the Town of Queensbury, next to Crandall Park. Collins sells her booklet for \$10; proceeds go to The Friends of Cole's Woods and our Audubon chapter.

Hawk Watch festival, Sept. 11

The annual Helderberg Escarpment Hawk Watch (HEHW) and festival kick offs at The Overlook at Thacher State Park in Voorheesville, on **Saturday Sept. 11**, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Experienced birders will help park visitors identify raptors riding thermals (rising warm air currents) over the Helderberg Escarpment. Rehabilitators will also bring live birds of prey.

According to their Facebook page, HEHW is committed to education about raptors and their activity along the escarpment, as well as collecting regional migration data for scientific research.

The Overlook and 80-car handi-

capped accessible parking lot are situated on the six-mile escarpment cliff, winding through John Boyd Thacher State Park, 10 miles west of Albany. The escarpment has an elevation of 1,100 feet, offering a wide northeast vista. In past years, 4,000



visitors have observe 2,000 Broad-winged Hawks and other migrating raptors during the hawk watch and festival.

The leaders of HEHW represent a coalition of regional bird organizations: Alan Devoe Bird Club, Audubon Society of the Capital Region, Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club, and SAAS. The *Altamont Enterprise* interviewed SAAS president John Loz and hawk enthusiast Will Aubrey for this July 16 podcast, "Counting migrating raptors" (<https://play.acast.com/s/0768f897-c339-581b-806d-21e5c6d34d54/60f2189993fea40013092d40>).

Detail from John James Audubon's 1812 illustration of Broad-winged Hawks.

(Photos from Audubon: file:///netx/audubon/data/repository/NAS and Chapter Users/Photos/Birds/John James Audubon Illustrations/Plate 91, Broad Winged Hawk final.jpg.)

Sibley's latest

By Mark Silo, SAAS Board Member

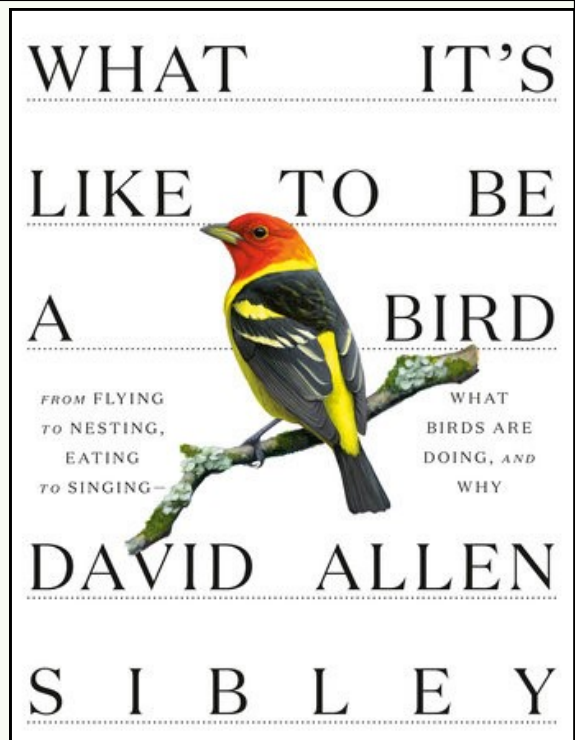
***What It's Like to Be a Bird: From Flying to Nesting, Eating to Singing--What Birds Are Doing, and Why* (Sibley Guides) by David A. Sibley (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2020).**

It's not a field guide. It's not a systematic birding reference manual. It's not a book you'll want to read cover to cover. But it is unique and fun and enlightening and handsome.

David Sibley's *What it's Like to Be a Bird* is a combination coffee table art book and compilation of hundreds of incredible factoids about birds ... art that will entertain you and information that will instruct and amaze even the most seasoned birders.

Just one example: How is it that those hardy waterfowl that winter in the icy north maintain their body heat? How is it that the blood returning from their un-insulated legs doesn't result in chilled blood running through the vital organs? Sibley explains that birds have evolved a system of dozens of intertwined mini-diameter veins and arteries whereby the heated outgoing blood transfers warmth to the incoming blood.

The book begins with a 24-page introduction that groups information by subject, such as night vision, navigation, and keeping warm. Then follows the heart of the volume: multi-page treatments of 84 species or groupings of North America's most common birds, with a total of over 300 new illustrations including at least one full-scale illustration for each, and much more captivating information.



Bolton Library garden grows

A team of SAAS board members expanded the native perennial garden at the Bolton Free Library in Bolton Landing on May 27. Pictured here after a morning of digging and planting are president John Loz, board member Dusty Caldwell and Bolton Free Library director Megan Baker. The photo was taken by Mark Silo; he and Kathy Silo also worked on the garden.

They added plants that will attract hummingbirds, bees and butterflies and other native pollinators:

- Peachie's Pick Stokes Aster (*Stokesia laevis* *Peachie's Pick*)
- Balmy™ Purple Bee Balm (*Monarda didyma* *Balbalmurp*),
- Blue Marvel Salvia (*Salvia nemorosa* *Blue Marvel*)
- Jacob Cline Bee Balm (*Monarda Jacob Cline*)
- Butterfly Weed (*Asclepius tuberosa*).

These were added to an existing garden that has coneflower, phlox, creeping phlox and Black-eyed Susan.

See the garden on **Saturday, Oct. 9**, when Dr. James D. Paruk will talk about and sign copies of his new book *Loon Lessons* on the library lawn. See page 3 for details on that event.

No Place Like Nome

Seven birders, including four of us from the Capital District, visited Nome, Alaska, from June 25 to July 4, skillfully led by Tom Johnson of Field Guides Birding Tours (<https://fieldguides.com/>). Nome is on the Seward peninsula in western Alaska, near the Bering Sea and Bering Strait. We saw more than 100 bird species, as well as a Grizzly Bear, several Moose, and vast tundra landscapes.

Nature photographer Scott Stoner of Naturelogues (<https://www.naturelogues.com/>) offered us these wildlife photos from the trip. - Joyce Miller, Newsletter Editor



Above: One of the most sought-after birds was the dazzling Bluethroat. This is one of several singing males the group spotted.

Below, a powerful male Musk Ox gazes into the camera. On the left, a female, guarding a calf here, has more delicate horns. (Photos: Scott Stoner)



Scott Stoner of Naturelogues offered these photos from Nome:

- Left, top: A Gyr Falcon perched on a mile marker sign along the Nome-Teller Highway, northwest of Nome.
- Left, middle: The Snowshoe Hare's huge back feet keep it above snow.
- Below, left: An energetic American Dipper snapped up this small silver fish to feed its young in a nest under a bridge nearby. Dippers dive into rushing streams to catch insects and fish.

Below, right: Joyce Miller snapped this scene on a road near Nome, Alaska. A rocky stream weaves through the tundra with snow-dappled mountains in the distance.

