



The Fledgling

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

Vol. 40 No. 3, **March — May 2023**

Now in our 40th Year!

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

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



A Black Bear cub. Photo courtesy of Charlotte Demers, ESF Newcomb.

Spring programs: Bears, birds and Vischer Ferry

SAAS is offering in-person monthly programs at area libraries this spring.

On **Tuesday, March 21** at 5:30 p.m., wildlife technician Charlotte Demers will present “**Adirondack Black Bears in Winter**” at the Richards Library, 36 Elm Street, Warrensburg. Pre-registration is not needed.

The Black Bear is one of the largest mammals found in the Adirondacks, yet it is mostly inactive for up to five months of the year. Demers will talk about the natural history of this omnivorous mammal and the physical and behavioral characteristics of Black Bears that make them so well adapted to our northern climate.

Demers has spent more than 35 years working as a research technician at the SUNY ESF Newcomb Campus. She has worked with North American Beavers, Black Bears,

White-tailed Deer, small mammals, game birds and song-birds as well as investigating the habitat requirements of these species.

On **Wednesday, April 26** at 7:00 p.m. in the Dutcher Community Room of Saratoga Springs Public Library, Dr. Kathryn Schneider will talk about her book, ***Birding the Hudson Valley***. Please register for the program at <https://sspl.libcal.com/event/10280151>.

Schneider will provide tips, guidance, and encouragement for bird enthusiasts of all skill levels to leave their backyards and explore the rich diversity of bird life beyond the bird feeder. Her wide-ranging presentation is packed with photos of birds from the book.

She will discuss her background as an ornithologist, teacher and conservationist, and review the life journey that led her to spend three years writing her first book. Books will be available for purchase and signing following the event.



Dr. Kathryn Schneider

Continued on page 3

Celebrating SAAS's 40th year

The Southern Adirondack Audubon Society (SAAS) started in 1983 by a group of local birders and environmentalists. It was formally incorporated in 1984 as a not-for-profit organization in New York. It is a certified local chapter of the National Audubon Society, serving Warren, Washington, northern Saratoga and southern Hamilton counties of New York State.

For 40 years, the chapter has offered:

- Monthly programs by local and regional experts on birds, animals, plants, world travel and environmental issues. These are free, well-attended, open to the public, and usually held at local public libraries. During the pandemic, programs continued on Zoom.
- Bird walks, such as the popular “First Saturday” walks in the Saratoga Springs area.
- The quarterly newsletter, *The Fledgling*, with features on SAAS events, regional bird species, wildflowers and more.
- Information about birds, environmental research, and Audubon advocacy projects through its website, newsletter and social media.
- Educational offerings such as birding backpacks for beginning birders, currently available in several area public libraries. Projects like these support the development of the next generation of birders and people concerned with the environment.
- Detailed descriptions of accessible birding areas, as well as funding for accessible local bird viewing areas.
- Organized citizen science projects such as the Christmas Bird Count and Climate Watch.
- Expertise to protect our local environment. SAAS board members have monitored endangered species such as Peregrine Falcons in the Glens Falls area. SAAS supported the protection of Queensbury's Great Cedar Swamp, a unique type of wetland called a marl fen.

Southern Adirondack Audubon Society

P.O. Box 5044
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

<https://www.southernadironackaudubon.org>
info@southernadironackaudubon.org

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

Instagram: #adkbirds

Board and Committees

Officers

President: Rob Snell
(president@southernadironackaudubon.org)
Vice-President: Mark Silo
Treasurer: Laurie Murphy
Secretary: Deb Ferguson

Board of Directors

2021-2023	Kim Atkins Peyton Atkins John Loz
2022-2024	Judy Staubo Laurie Murphy OPEN
2023-2025	Dusty Caldwell Mark Silo Deb Ferguson

Board meetings are held monthly except July, August and December. Members are invited to attend.

Committees

Conservation: OPEN
Education: OPEN
Membership Secretary: Rob Snell
(membership@southernadironackaudubon.org)
Newsletter: Joyce Miller (editor@southernadironackaudubon.org)
Programs: John Loz (Interim chair)
(programs@southernadironackaudubon.org)
Publicity: OPEN

Chapter memberships are \$15. Renew at <https://southernadironackaudubon.org/membership/>, or send a check using the form on the Southern Adirondack Audubon Society (SAAS) website. Contributions support SAAS's education and conservation activities in our region.

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

New: Bird-friendly garden project

By Rob Snell, SAAS President

It's been estimated that 9,000 caterpillars are required to fully fledge a single brood of Black-capped Chickadees. That's about 250 per day for more than a month.

Chickadees seem to be everywhere, but caterpillars are not. The highest density of caterpillars are found on native plants, where the plants and insects have evolved together.

Ornamental and invasive plants have a disproportionately low number of caterpillars living on them, and hence are not good places for insect-eating birds to look for food.

Many of us enjoy feeding birds in the winter, but their nutritional needs are highest while raising young in the spring and summer. We should all make an effort to landscape our yards with native plant species. This will help reduce the stress of rearing young, and increase the success of our cherished bird community.

This year, our SAAS chapter hopes to launch a "Bird Friendly" property certification program. For a modest fee, SAAS will help you determine if your yard is "bird friendly."

We are excited to bring this popular program to our community, but we need volunteers to help make it a reality. If you are knowledgeable about native plants and their uses in landscaping, please consider helping us with a couple hours of your time this season. To volunteer your expertise, please email saasnativespecies@gmail.com.

Thank you in advance for your participation. We will keep you updated on our progress.



Rob Snell

Donate to SAAS Annual Giving Fund

By Judy Staubo, SAAS Fundraising Committee

Forty years! Countless birds, bird walks, Christmas bird counts, education programs and now birding backpacks in local libraries!

It is a wonderful time to celebrate our past collaborations and to plan for the promises of the future.

We invite you to join us with a celebratory contribution which can help buy binoculars for our new birding backpack project, help present a program, or provide support for our area grasslands.

For more information about these projects, see these SAAS pages:

- Birding Backpacks: <https://www.southernadironackaudubon.org/education/>
- SAAS Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/SouthernAdirondackAudubonSociety/>

To renew your membership or donate, please see <https://www.southernadironackaudubon.org/membership/>. Thank you.



Residents can now borrow SAAS birding backpacks from several area libraries. The project hopes to introduce people of all ages to the joys and fun of birding and wildlife watching.

Monthly programs

Continued from page 1

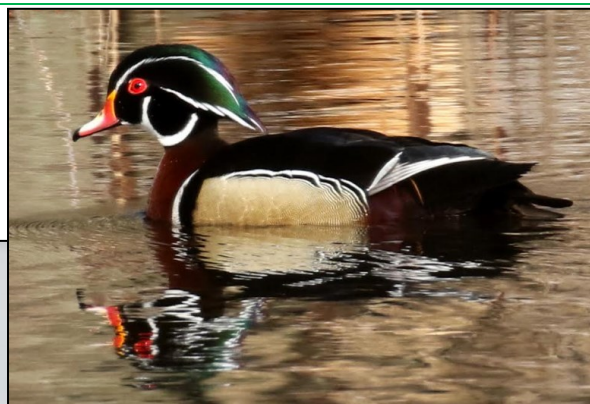
Schneider grew up in Claverack, N.Y., and attended Cornell and Princeton universities, where she completed a PhD. She taught college courses in general biology and ornithology at the University of Richmond and later at Hudson Valley Community College. For 14 years, she directed the biodiversity inventory program N.Y. Natural Heritage Program.

She is past President of the New York State Ornithological Association, a former member of the Columbia County Environmental Management Council, and a Columbia Land Conservancy volunteer. She currently co-chairs the Steering Committee for New York's third Breeding Bird Atlas Project.

On **Wednesday, May 24**, Dr. John Hershey will present "**The Birds of Vischer Ferry**," at the Saratoga Springs Public Library at 7:00 p.m. Please register online at <https://sspl.libcal.com/event/10277316>.

Hershey has photographed birds at the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve in Clifton Park for 20 years. He will provide a pictorial tour of some of the main birding spots and trails in the preserve. Most importantly, he will share some of his

John Hershey photographed this Great Blue Heron (below) and Wood Duck (right) at Vischer Ferry in Clifton Park.



April 2021, and perhaps a few other lesser rarities as well.

Hershey is a former board member of the Audubon Society of the Capital Region. He also has served as Secretary and a Director for the Hudson Mohawk Bird Club. He has been leading field trips to Vischer Ferry Preserve, Peebles Island, and Fox Hill Road for many years.

Birding has led him to travel throughout North America and more recently to Ecuador, Costa Rica, Panama, and India. He has presented a number of programs on some of his favorite birding trips as well as on local birding hotspots. He is semi-retired and works part time as a psychologist in private practice.

Please check the SAAS website and Facebook page for details and any updates about the programs.

favorite bird photos that illustrate the bird species characteristic of the Preserve and its habitat. These include ducks, woodpeckers, swallows, warblers, blackbirds, shorebirds, herons, rails, and bitterns. He will talk about the "mega-rarity" Violet-green Swallow that he discovered there in

New Betar Byway booklet now available

Springtime Birds and Wildflowers Along the Betar Byway is now available for purchase for \$10. SAAS's new booklet features wildflowers and birds seen along the popular Betar Byway trail in South Glens Falls. It was published in October.

The booklet was written and produced by Glens Falls resident Diane Collins, *The Fledgling's* wildflower columnist. It features Collins' flower photos plus local bird photos by re-

nowned local wildlife photographer Gordon Ellmers of Fort Edward.

Collins collaborated with SAAS to win a Toubia Family Foundation grant to publish the booklet.

Visit the SAAS website for details and to purchase copies. Copies are also available at St. Andrews Ace Hardware on Upper Glen Street in Queensbury.



Diane Collins is the author of the new Betar Byway booklet.



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.

First Saturday Bird Walks continue to May

Join Ray Perry and other SAAS members for morning bird walks along the beautiful Spring Run Trail in Saratoga Springs on the first Saturday of each month, on **March 4, April 1 and May 6**.

So far, 125 bird species have been seen along the Spring Run Trail. See Cornell's eBird online checklist for this birding hotspot: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L1548124>.



Red-bellied Woodpeckers are often seen in the SAAS area. Photo: Patrick Dennen, Audubon Photography Awards, 2012.

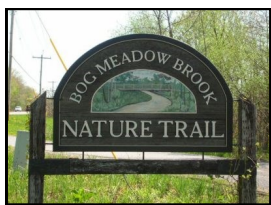
The one-mile trail is paved and flat. It is used for walking, running and biking, as well as birding. It offers a variety of habitats.

Dress warmly. Bring binoculars if you have them. All skill levels are welcomed.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. sharp at the Spring Run Trail parking area near the corner of East Ave. and Excelsior Ave. If the parking area is full, park just slightly down the road on Excelsior Ave. in the EBI Beverage Center parking lot, adjacent to the Spring Run Trail.

Bog Meadow Brook Walk on April 23

On **Saturday, April 23** at 8:00 a.m., Alan Mapes will lead a walk along the Bog Meadow Brook Nature Trail in Saratoga Springs.



The walk will focus on spring birds and waterfowl. The trail includes an extensive boardwalk system through various wetland habitat: open marsh, wet meadow and forested wetland.

Meet at the Meadowbrook Road parking area at 7:45 a.m. to check in for the 8:00 a.m. start time. For a species lists, parking directions and

Field trips set for March, April, May

- Check the SAAS website and Facebook pages for updates on these trips.
- Please familiarize yourself with the SAAS **Field Trip Guidelines** (<https://southernadirondackaudubon.org/field-trip-guidelines/>).
- SAAS strongly encourages members to follow the American Birding Association **Code of Birding Ethics** (<https://www.aba.org/aba-code-of-birding-ethics/>).

more details about the trail, see <https://www.southernadirondackaudubon.org/bog-meadow-brook/>. Waterproof footwear may be required.

Betar Wildflower and Bird Walks, May 7 & 21

Wildflower expert Diane Collins and SAAS bird walk leader Joyce Miller will lead two trips in May along the Betar Byway in South Glens Falls. The group will look for spring birds and wildflowers, following the paved trail along the Hudson River.

- **Sunday, May 7** at 10:00 a.m.
- **Sunday, May 21** at 2:00 p.m.

Meet near the gazebo at the South Glens Falls Historical Park, First Street, South Glens Falls, at the north end of the Betar Byway.

Bring binoculars and water and wear comfortable walking shoes. The round-trip walk is about two miles long. Steady rain or predicted thunderstorms will cancel the walk. Contact Miller (editor@southernadirondackaudubon.org) to register for the walk.

For more about the trail and a potential bird species list, see: <https://www.southernadirondackaudubon.org/betar-byway/>.

Diane Collins will have copies of her latest book, *Springtime Birds & Wildflowers along the Betar Byway, South Glens Falls*. See Page 3 for details about the booklet.

Right: Crown Point State Historic Site in Essex County, on Lake Champlain. Photo: Joyce Miller

Crown Point bird banding, May 14

SAAS program chair John Loz will lead a bird walk at the Crown Point Historic Site on Sunday, May 14. It will include a visit to the noted Crown Point bird banding station.

The group will walk through fields and tree-lined paths to look for spring migrants. They'll visit the station to learn about bird banding and perhaps have an opportunity to hold and release a banded bird. The group can also visit the Crown Point Visitors Center.

For lunch, bird walk attendees can bring a lunch or stop at the West Addison General Store (W.A.G.S.) in Vermont near the Champlain Bridge. The group can travel with Loz to the nearby Dead Creek Wildlife Refuge and Visitors Center to look for marsh, field, and forest birds.

Attendees will meet at the Crown Point Visitors Center located at 115 Grandview Drive, Crown Point, NY 12928 before 8:00 a.m. The bird walk will promptly start at 8:00 a.m.

For more about Crown Point, maps, entrance fees and directions, see <https://parks.ny.gov/historic-sites/34/details.aspx>.



"Slow Birding" with The Bird Diva on April 30

Join Bird Diva Bridget Butler for a Slow Birding Outing that will offer a mindful approach to birding that will connect participants with birds, the land, and yourself.

Butler will lead an out-of-pocket-free outing that will focus on getting to know birds beyond their identification.

The group will start by getting to know who is on the landscape that day and practice sharing observations as a group in a way that uplifts each participant no matter their level of knowledge or experience birding. Next, the group will settle into a sit spot session with prompts that Butler will offer to the group. The event will wrap up by coming back together and sharing observations, feelings, and wonderings with the whole group. The session will last between two and three hours to allow for the group experience to flow naturally.

Group size is limited to 15 participants. Register in advance for the program by contacting Programs Chair John Loz at programs@southernadirondackaudubon.org. He will provide additional details about the program and location for registrants. There is no cost to participants.

Participants should dress for the weather and at least 30 minutes sitting in place. Consider bringing a portable chair, journal, hot beverage or water, binoculars, and whatever will make you most comfortable sitting in place. Butler will have binoculars and portable chairs for participants to borrow. She will strive to make each outing as accessible as possible. For more information about Slow Birding, see this page: <https://www.birddiva.com/slow-birding>.



Bridget Butler, the Bird Diva

Consulting has her traveling 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. Her 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.

Butler lives in St. Albans, Vermont with her husband and three young children.

Cornell's Bird Feeder and Nest Cams

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology currently offers four live feeder cameras and five nest cameras streaming live from the United States, Ontario, Canada, Panama, Bermuda, and New Zealand, at this website: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/>.

The website also links to recorded highlights from the cameras, such as:

- Ospreys nesting in Savannah, Georgia;
- A ranger examining a Royal Albatross chick in New Zealand as the parent watches carefully;
- Bermuda Petrels in their underground nesting burrows;
- Fruit feeders with tropical birds at Canopy Lodge, Panama, with a Keel-billed Toucan enjoying a banana;

Butler presented a popular Zoom SAAS program in March 2022, "Female Birds and the Mothers of Ornithology."

Butler is known as The Bird Diva. She has been working in conservation and environmental education for more than 20 years throughout New England. Her business Bird Diva

- Hummingbirds and other colorful birds at a feeder in West Texas.

Audubon Migration Site

National Audubon Society and other partners launched the Bird Migration Explorer site in September 2022.

It is an animated graphic guide to the annual migration journeys made by more than 450 bird species in the Western Hemisphere, and the challenges they face along the way. Users can learn more about a species, the migratory birds at a specific location, or a conservation challenge birds face. See the Bird Migration Explorer at <https://explorer.audubon.org/home>

Atlas project seeking area birders

With two years remaining in the five-year project, the New York State Breeding Bird Atlas III is seeking area birders to cover lightly-birded atlas blocks to look for breeding bird behaviors. Many of the priority blocks are within the SAAS membership area. Observations are recorded in the eBird database.

Atlasing is a great way to increase one's birding skills. See <https://ebird.org/atlasny/home> for details and to see which atlas blocks need attention. The Atlas Essentials page offers a good overview: <https://ebird.org/atlasny/about/atlas-essentials>.

Birding Festivals

Cornell Lab of Ornithology offers a searchable listing of upcoming birding festivals around North America: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/birding-festivals>.

These two events are coming up in June:

- June 2 to 4: Great Adirondack Birding Celebration at Paul Smith's College Visitor Interpretive Center.
- June 8 to 11: The Adirondack Boreal Birding Festival in Lake Pleasant, Hamilton County.

Ecuador trip recap

By Laurie Murphy, SAAS Treasurer

In early October, nine of us from all over the United States met in Quito, Ecuador for 10 days of travel and birding. The trip, organized by Holbrook Tours, was hosted by SAAS. Our group met by Zoom before the trip to say hello and get to know each other.

The first half of the trip included several birding sites on the western slope of the Andes. We were based in Mindo at the Sachatamia Lodge. The second half of the trip was on the wetter, more tropical eastern slope, where we stayed at San Isidro Lodge in a cloud forest reserve. As we were traveling across the Andes from the west to the east, we spent one night in Hacienda La Carriona, a large old farmhouse, a quiet spot tucked away outside of Quito.

At sunrise one day, we hiked into the woods to sit in a bird blind at Refugio Paz De Las Aves. Here, we saw the incredible bright-orange Andean Cock-of-the-Rock and five species of antpitta. These small, cute birds have chubby bellies, long legs and seem to be missing their tail feathers. They were among my favorite species. (See photo on this page.)

At the Rio Silanche Reserve, we climbed a three-story observation tower at dawn and spent the morning in the tree canopy. We saw 43 species including a Collared Aracari, a Yellow-throated Toucan, a Bat Falcon, many tanagers, and some seedeaters. Our guide, Andres, said it was the most species he had ever seen at that spot so we really lucked out. In the distance, we heard the bark and roar of Howler monkeys, the loudest monkeys in the world.

We spent another day at high elevation (12,000 feet) at the Continental Divide, where we drove across empty, wide-open plains and saw the active Cotopaxi volcano off in the distance. While in that area, we saw the massive Andean Condor, and had the good luck of finding a Spectacled Bear on a hillside.

We spent much of each day walking slowly in different areas and over different terrains. On our way to or from a reserve, someone often would spot something from the van and we would pull over quickly to check it out. During one stop, we positively identified a Bobolink, a life bird for our guide! One had not been seen in Ecuador since the 1980s or '90s.

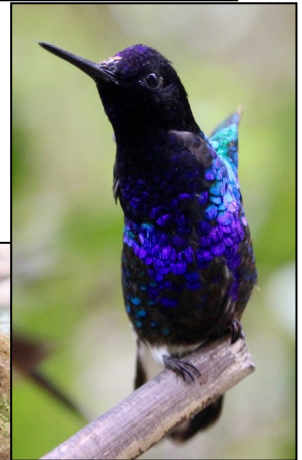
We had beautiful walks at high elevations in the mist and clouds where we enjoyed the ever-changing view. Unlike what we typically experience in the U.S., while birding in Ecuador, we found ourselves frequently alone. Temperature variations were dramatic. At lower elevations, we had to keep cool and be careful about getting too much sun. At higher elevations, we wore warm hats and gloves. We ventured out at night several times to see a Black-and-White Owl or a Lyre-tailed Nightjar.

People have asked me what bird I was most excited to have seen. It

is an absolutely impossible question. In 10 days, we saw 280 species and our guide identified another 20 by ear! We saw 43 different species of hummingbirds including the Sword-billed Hummingbird with an insanely long bill and the Sapphire-vented Puffleg with the funniest bunch of puffy feathers on its legs. The Booted Racket-tail hummingbird not only has puffs on its legs, but also a long skinny tail that forks and ends with oval flags. The colors on the hummingbirds were amazing. We saw 58 different tanagers and allies, including the Glistening Green and the Lacrimose Mountain-Tanager.



From top: Plate-billed Mountain Toucan, Yellow-breasted Antpitta, Velvet-purple Coronet hummingbird, Toucan Barbet. Photos by Laurie Murphy.



We also saw parrots, guans, trogons, motmots, and five species of toucans.

Ecuador is a beautiful country with so much to see and we had a wonderful trip thanks to our excellent guide, Andres, skilled driver Kevin, and an upbeat group of always enthusiastic birders.

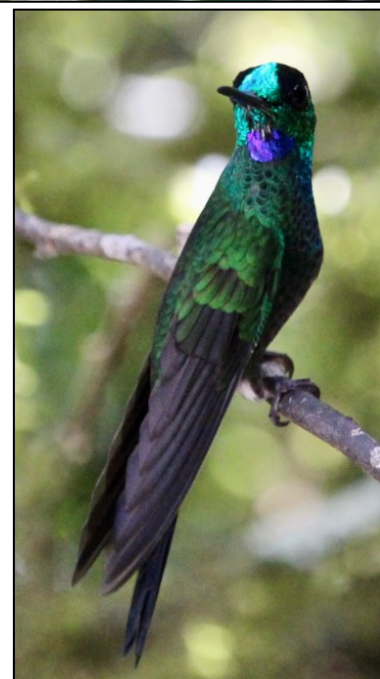
See Page 5 for more Ecuador bird photos and details about SAAS's next trip, to Cuba in October.



More birds of Ecuador, clockwise from top left:

- Flame-faced Tanager
- Golden Tanager
- Masked Trogon (with insect)
- Tourmaline Sunangel hummingbird
- the brilliant orange, foot-long Andean Cock-of-the-rock.

Photos by Laurie Murphy



Left: This scenic shot was taken at 12,000 feet on the way to Reserva Antisana, in Provincia de Pichincha. It was within sight of the Cotopaxi volcano, where the group saw Andean Condors, Carunculated Caracara, Aplomado Falcon, Andean Teal and many more birds, plus Spectacled Bear.

Go to Cuba in October with SAAS!

SAAS and Holbrook Tours are offering a nine-day trip to Cuba in October 15-23: "Cuba: A Mosaic of Culture, Community and Ecological Riches." It is limited to 10 to 15 participants. The trip cost is \$2,895. The single room supplement is \$345. Registration is open now.

The itinerary includes Zapata National Park, Soroa Orchidarium, the Viñales Valley, colonial Old Havana, Alamar Organoponic Gardens, and

UNESCO-designated Biosphere Reserve Las Terrazas. Among Cuba's 360+ recorded bird species are several endemics including the Cuban Trogon (Cuba's national bird), Zapata Wren, Zapata Rail, Cuban Emerald Hummingbird, Cuban Screech Owl, Cuban Tody, and the Bee Hummingbird, the smallest bird in the world.

Contact Debbie Jordan (debbie@holbrooktravel.com, 800-451-7111) to register. The trip website has details: <https://www.holbrooktravel.com/where-we-travel>

[/north-america-and-caribbean/cuba/cuba-mosaic-culture-community-and-ecological-o](https://www.holbrooktravel.com/north-america-and-caribbean/cuba/cuba-mosaic-culture-community-and-ecological-o).

Cuban Tody.
Photo courtesy of Holbrook Travel.



About Wildflowers

Dwarf Ginseng

By Diane Collins

Early May walks along small trails in Cole's Woods can lead you to colonies of Dwarf Ginseng (*Panax trifolius*), so named because the plants are small. At 8 inches high, the ball-like flower heads of delicate ephemeral lacy blossoms are a treat to see.

Its relative American Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) grows one to two feet high but is extremely scarce due to over-collecting in the 1800s and 1900s for medicinal use.

Dwarf ginseng is not typically used in herbal medicine because its roots are tiny. Like many native plants, however, it was known to Native Americans and used for chest pain, headaches, colic, hives, and gout.

A third species, Asian Ginseng (*Panax ginseng*), is found in Korea, Japan, and northern China where it is grown and marketed for healing substances in the large fleshy roots. The Korean market has been estimated at \$1,140 million, making Ko-



rea the largest distributor in the world.

Ginseng has been used in traditional Chinese medicine for centuries. Korean Red Ginseng supplements are widely distributed in the United States. Some scientists believe that ginsenosides in ginseng serve as antioxidants that enhance the immune system and help the body fight off infection and disease. Ginseng is part of a category of medicines called adaptogens, which help the body adapt and overcome stressors both physical and psychological. Ginseng is classified as an herbal medicine not regulated by the FDA. Research and physician guidance promote its

wise use.

The name *Panax*, meaning "all-healing" in Greek, shares the same origin as "panacea." It was picked for this plant genus by Carl Linnaeus (yes, him again!) who was aware of its wide use in Chinese medicine. The species name *trifolius* refers to Dwarf Ginseng's set of three palmate leaves arranged opposite each other and made up of three to five lobes.

American Ginseng leaves (*quinquefolius*) can have four to six sets of leaves. The flowers of both are shaped like umbels, spreading equidistant from a common point like the ribs of an umbrella. Dwarf Ginseng fruits ripen to yellowish berries, unlike American Ginseng's red berries. So, leaves, height, and berries of the *Panax* species in our Northeast woods let us identify this splendid wildflower with closely related healing properties to distant *Panax* wildflowers in the far East. Amazing!

Wildflower photographer Diane Collins is the author of several local wildflower booklets, including the new Springtime Birds & Wildflowers along the Betar Byway, South Glens Falls. See <http://www.wildflowersinyourownbackyard.com>.



Killdeer Chicks are precocial, able to run and feed on their own after hatching. They remain with their parents for about four weeks.

Photo courtesy of Gordie Ellmers.

Killdeer have white bellies, two black breast bands, brown

backs, and orange eye rings. Despite their striking plumage, they easily disappear in fields until they move.

Foxes, snakes, raccoons, skunks, opossums, hawks, crows and many other animals will prey on Killdeer adults, eggs and chicks. If a predator approaches the nest, the bird will race off dragging a wing to draw the predator away. Interestingly, they know which animals are not predators. If a horse or cow approaches the nest, they'll fluff up their feathers and run at the animal, according to Cornell's All About Birds website.

Nests are just shallow areas on soil. They'll have one or two broods a season, and stay with the same mate for the season. They are opportunistic omnivores, eating insects such as mosquitoes and ticks, seeds and fruit. They can swim.

As with all migratory birds in the United States, they are protected by the U.S. Migratory Bird Act. They are susceptible to death from pesticides, window strikes and car collisions.

Killdeer are members of the plover family. In winter, they migrate to southern North America, and parts of Central and South America. They'll breed as far north as Canada. The North American Breeding Bird Survey estimates that their populations declined about 26% between 1966 and 2019. For more about this personable bird, see:

- [Killdeer Identification. All About Birds. Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#)
- [ADW: Charadrius vociferus: INFORMATION \(animaldiversity.org\)](#)

Species Spotlight

Killdeer

By Joyce Miller, SAAS Newsletter Editor

One of the first and most vocal migrants people notice in early spring is the Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*). True to their Latin name, they are indeed vociferous, heralding their arrival with a loud, squeaky "Killy! Kill-eee!" call. They adapt well to human-occupied areas, nesting on flat, bare gravel in areas with very short vegetation: school rooftops, soccer fields, grassy fields, and roadsides.

Invasive species

Spotted Lanternfly

This information is provided to SAAS courtesy of New York State Integrated Pest Management, from Cornell University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Spotted lanternfly (*Lycorma deli-catula*) is an invasive species that is slowly spreading into upstate New York State. It does not bite or sting but is having an economic impact on NYS agriculture.

Spotted lanternfly has proven to be a serious pest of grapes (both cultivated and wild). They are swarm feeders and up to 400 Spotted lanternfly adults per vine have been reported. Feeding by a population this high has been shown to weaken the vine, leading to loss of winter hardiness, reduced or no return bloom or crop, and even vine death. They don't seem to be causing significant damage to agricultural crops such as hops, apples, or peaches, but the issue is still being studied.

The name lanternfly is misleading; spotted lanternflies have little in common with any type of fly. Another misconception arises when viewing adults with wings spread, making them look like moths. Spotted lanternflies are planthoppers in the order Hemiptera, or true bugs, and are more closely related to cicadas, brown marmorated stink bugs, aphids, and leafhoppers. All insects in this order have piercing-sucking mouthparts that allow them to drill into the phloem of a plant to feed directly on the sugary sap.

Spotted lanternflies do not appear to be damaging trees or most agricultural crops. In natural and residential areas, they feed on Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus*), black walnut, maples (they will preferentially feed on silver maple, then red maple), willow, river birch, black cherry, tulip poplar, and other trees.

As the insects consume a plant's sap, they expel large quantities of excess sugar-water (honeydew). Honey-

dew—often misidentified as sap—shows up on outdoor equipment, decking, vehicles, pets and your clothing and hair. As honeydew accumulates, thin, dark layers of sooty mold fungi grow on it. Fermenting honeydew can attract bees and wasps. This creates an increased stinging risk around infested plants.

How are they spreading to new locations? Adults and eggs hitchhike on vehicles or objects moved from an infested area. Eggs can be found on almost any outdoor surface, including rusted metal, firewood, stones, vehicles and building materials.

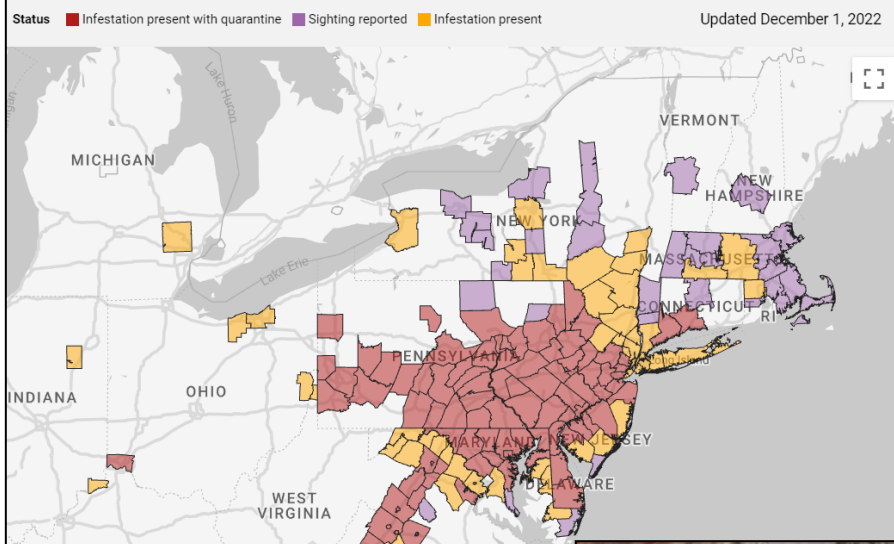
Spotted lanternflies can use their powerful hind legs to jump impressive distances. Adults fly short dis-

tances. On their own, they are able to move three to four miles by walking, jumping and flying.

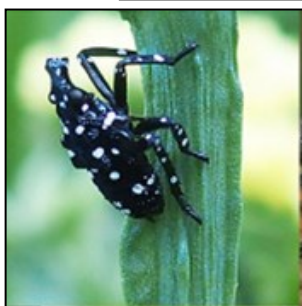
Spotted lanternfly produce one generation per year. Egg masses hatch in May and June, with

1/4" long black-and-white nymphs. From July to mid-August, the nymphs grow into 3/4" long insects with red coloration with white spots. They molt into 1" long adults with 2" long wingspans. Mating takes place starting in late August. Egg masses are produced in September through November or until the first killing freeze. Egg masses overwinter to start the new life cycle in May.

For more information, photos, videos and to report sightings of spotted lanternflies, visit <https://cals.cornell.edu/new-york-state-integrated-pest-management/outreach-education/whats-bugging-you/spotted-lanternfly>.



The map above indicates counties where lanternflies have been sighted. Left and below show spotted lanternfly larvae and adults. Right, females lay egg masses. Photos courtesy of NYS Integrated Pest Management.



2022 Christmas Bird Count recap

By Linda White, CBC Count Compiler

SAAS's annual Christmas Bird Count was held on Sunday, Dec. 18.

Fourteen intrepid birders were out in the field on December 18 counting each and every bird for the Hudson Falls Count Circle. They are: team Beth, Brad, and Nathan Bidwell, Rob Snell, team Russ Hilliard and Jeff Gardiner, Sue Pierce, Barb Putnam, Mike Rivette, Pat Fitzgerald, Joy Keithline, and team Helen Crawshaw, Jacquie Tinker, Vicki Bocketti, and Linda White.

Many thanks go out to all the participants who spent a day so close to Christmas to contribute to one of the greatest citizen science projects. Combined they drove 392 miles and walked 18.25 miles, for a total of 56 hours.

This amazing effort garnered 62 species, the highest number the count has had since it began in 1983. Total individual birds seen were 10,016.

Red Crossbills were observed in Moreau by Rob Snell for the first time in count history. There were

many other highlights, including Black Vultures, a Screech Owl, an American Pipit, Peregrine Falcons, a Red-winged Blackbird, a Common Loon, and Long-tailed Ducks.

The most abundant species were American Crows and European Starlings. All data can be found on the Audubon Christmas Bird Count site. Under count summaries, there is data for each species and the number of times/years they have been observed.

Here are the count results:

Canada Goose – 970, American Black Duck – 27, Mallard – 85, Mottled Duck – 1, Long-tailed Duck 5, Common Goldeneye – 156, Hooded Merganser 51.

Wild Turkey – 85, Common Loon – 1, Double-crested Cormorant – 1, Black Vulture – 4.

Northern Harrier – 4, Sharp-shinned Hawk – 5, Bald Eagle – 2, Red-tailed Hawk – 41, Rough-legged Hawk – 2, Ring-billed Gull – 10, Herring Gull – 52, Rock Pigeon – 647, Mourning Dove – 176, Eastern Screech-Owl – 1, Barred Owl – 2, Belted Kingfisher 1, Red-bellied Woodpecker – 31 Downy Woodpecker – 43, Hairy Woodpecker 23, Northern Flicker – 3, Pileated Woodpecker – 8.

American Kestrel – 2, Merlin – 3, Peregrine Falcon – 2, Blue Jay – 110, American Crow – 3,125, Fish Crow – 1, Common Raven – 7, Horned Lark – 194, Black-capped Chickadee – 136, Tufted Titmouse – 74, Red-



This Red-tailed Hawk was perched along Fire Road near the Coles Woods parking lot in the Glens Falls area. Photo: Sue Pierce.

breasted Nuthatch – 18, White-breasted Nuthatch – 65, Brown Creeper – 6, Carolina Wren – 8, Golden-crowned Kinglet – 3.

Eastern Bluebird – 56, American Robin – 105, Northern Mockingbird – 18, European Starling – 2,368, American Pipit – 1, Snow Bunting – 12, American Tree Sparrow – 55, Chipping Sparrow – 4, Dark-eyed Junco – 579, White-throated Sparrow – 13, Song Sparrow – 1, Northern Cardinal 74, Red-winged Blackbird 1, House Finch – 109, Red Crossbill – 3, American Goldfinch 86, House Sparrow – 279.

Renew for 2023 and get a chance to win this poster!

Southern Adirondack Audubon Society memberships run the calendar year, from January to December. Chapter memberships are only \$15.

Join as a chapter supporter or renew your support by **April 7**, and receive three raffle entries to win this 2018 Audubon Photo Award winning Red-winged Blackbird photo by Donald Quintana in Merced National Wildlife Refuge, California. This photo was on national tour in 2019. It is 36" wide by 24" tall, mounted on foam board, and can be hung as is.



An additional ticket will be allotted for every \$5 donated here or through our donation page.

A SAAS member in Ballston Spa won the December drawing's poster. A

member from Queensbury won the September drawing.

Contributions support SAAS's education and conservation activities in our region.

Approximately 600 members of National Audubon live in our chapter area. Many National members also become chapter supporter members, to financially support our local efforts.

Please take a minute to renew your annual membership for 2023 at the SAAS Membership page (<https://www.southernadirondackaudubon.org/membership/>). Thank you.