



The Fledgling

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

Vol. 41 No. 2, **December 2023 — February 2024** **Now in our 41st Year!**

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

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

Winter programs: Montezuma and Canadian book author

SAAS's monthly programs will be held online on Zoom for January and February. No December program is scheduled.

On **Wednesday, Jan. 24** at 7:00 p.m., wildlife biologist Linda Ziemba will offer the Zoom program **"Wetland Management for Migratory Birds at the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge."** The online program is co-hosted by Saratoga Springs Public Library.

Ziemba will discuss how staff at the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge make water level management decisions for migratory and nesting birds. She will describe Montezuma and the National Wildlife Refuge System. She'll also talk about wetland ecology, restoration, and management; present results from bird, vegetation, and habitat monitoring on the refuge; and explain how these results inform habitat management.

Ziemba has been the wildlife biologist at the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge since 2006. Her primary focuses are providing habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife and providing opportunities for people to connect with nature as land stewards.

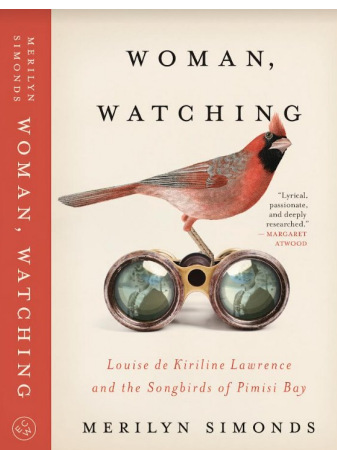
She began her career in wildlife biology as a volunteer at E.B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge in New Jersey in 1994 and has also worked at Izembek, Cape May, and Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuges.



Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, in Seneca Falls, N.Y., is a haven for migratory waterfowl. Photo: Rick Greene.

The Montezuma refuge, created in 1938, is located in Seneca Falls, between Syracuse and Rochester. For details, see <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/montezuma/about-us>.

Author Marilyn Simonds will present a Zoom talk on Canadian naturalist **"Louise de Kiriline Lawrence: How One Woman Changed How We See Birds"** on **Tuesday, Feb. 27** at 7:00 p.m. The online event is co-hosted with Crandall Library.



In 1935, Louise de Kiriline Lawrence — born into Swedish aristocracy, survivor of the Russian Civil War, and nurse-in-charge of the world-famous Dionne Quintuplets — retreated to her wilderness cabin on the Mattawa River in Northern Ontario, Canada. She spent the next 50 years studying birds, the life history of many of them a mystery at the time.

Training herself in the art of observation and ornithology, Lawrence published groundbreaking studies and wrote six books and almost 100 journal articles and magazine stories on birds. Her "loghouse nest" on Pimisi Bay became a mecca for ornithologists and bird enthusiasts from around the world.

Merilyn Simonds is the internationally published author of 20 books, including the novel *The Holding*, a *New York Times Book Review* Editors' Choice, and the Canadian classic nonfiction novel, *The Convict Lover*, a finalist for the Governor General's Award. Among Simonds' best-selling nonfiction is *A New Leaf*, the story of her gardens north of Kingston and *Gutenberg's Fingerprint*, a meditation on reading, writing, and the future of the printed book.

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Above, far left: Canadian naturalist Louise de Kiriline Lawrence

Bottom, far left: author Merilyn Simonds

Left: Book cover of *Women Watching*

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Southern Adirondack Audubon Society

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2022-2024	Judy Staubo Laurie Murphy OPEN
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Board meetings are held monthly except July, August and December. Members are invited to attend.

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

Chapter memberships are \$15. Renew at <https://southernadirondackaudubon.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.

Meet our board members

Paul Lundberg

Paul Lundberg will be joining the SAAS Board of Directors in 2024. He is a native of Easton, in southern Washington County. He and his wife Judi raised their family and still reside on the family farm started by his grandfather in the 1930s.

Lundberg received a degree in Natural Resources Conservation from Morrisville College, a degree in Zoology and Entomology from Colorado State University, and completed his master's degree in Energy Management from New York Institute of Technology. The majority of his professional career has involved facilities management. For the last 24 years, he has served as Director of Construction Management and Planning at Skidmore College.

He has been an amateur naturalist since the early 1970s. He attributes his passion for all things in the natural world, in part, to his grandfather. As a child, he shadowed "Gramps" in the walks through the fields and forests, as his grandfather told him the common names and uses of the flora, fauna and fungi they encountered during the workdays on the farm.

Additionally, his mother taught him to use field guides during family walks, to understand even more of the natural world.

Paul recently completed the Master Naturalist program sponsored by Cornell University. "I continue to enjoy learning, experiencing and sharing

knowledge of the wonders of this little planet we are all part of," he said.



Lundberg stretches his wings during a visit to the birding mecca Cape May, N.J. Photo courtesy of Paul Lundberg.

Winter programs

Continued from Page 1

Simonds' most recent work, *Woman, Watching: Louise de Kiriline Lawrence and the Songbirds of Pimisi Bay*, is an innovative memoir/biography of Louise de Kiriline Lawrence, an extraordinary self-trained ornithologist who became one of Canada's greatest naturalists and nature writers. It was released in May, 2022. Author Margaret Atwood hailed the book as "Lyrical, passionate, and deeply researched."

Born in Winnipeg, Canada, Simonds grew up in Brazil. Her work has been anthologized and published internationally in eight countries. She writes in a wide variety of genres — personal essay, memoir, travel, literary fiction and creative nonfiction. She lives with her husband, author Wayne Grady, in Kingston, Ontario, during spring and summer and in the mountains of central Mexico in the cooler months. She sits on the Board of Directors of the Pelee Island Bird Observatory in Ontario, Canada.

Christmas Bird Count set for Saturday, Dec. 16

SAAS's annual Hudson Falls Christmas Bird Count will be held on **Saturday, Dec. 16**. The snow/rain date is Sunday, Dec. 17.

Last year, 14 observers found a total of 62 species and 10,016 individual birds, the highest numbers for the count since it started in 1983.

Area birders will follow specific routes in an established 15-mile-wide diameter circle in the Glens Falls region. Most birding is done from a car. Some teams may walk along trails or in area parks.

For more information and to join a count team for a whole or partial day, contact SAAS count compiler Linda White at least a week before the count, at (518) 222-5675.

The Christmas Bird Count is a fun way to increase birding skills. New birders do not need to be bird identi-



A male Pileated Woodpecker perches on a branch in this photo by Dr. Gordon Ellmers of Fort Edward. This was one of 64 bird species seen during the 2022 Hudson Falls Christmas Bird Count.

Chapman suggested it as an alternative to Christmas "side hunts," which were competitions to see which teams could shoot the most birds and other animals. Now, birders simply count every bird they see in the designated count areas.

For details about this National Audubon project, see: <https://www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count>. Past results are found on this site.

fication experts. They can help spot birds and keep team records.

Counts are held worldwide each year between December 14 and January 5. Tens of thousands of volunteers participate in more than 2,000 individual counts across North America.

The event is now in its 124th year. The Christmas Bird Census started in 1900 when ornithologist Frank

This year's count results will be included in the March newsletter.

Check [SAAS's Facebook page](#) and [website](#) for updated and new event information!

First Saturday Bird Walks continue

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 this winter.

Walks start at 8 a.m. on these Saturdays: **December 2, January 6**

and February 3.

So far, 129 bird species have been seen along the Spring Run Trail. See Cornell's eBird online checklist for this hotspot: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L1548124>. ("Bar Chart" link show species seen for each month.)

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, which is adjacent to the Spring Run Trail.

For directions and details: <https://www.southernadirondackaudubon.org/Spring-Run/>.

Field trip guidelines

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



Red-bellied Woodpeckers are seen year-round on the Spring Run Trail. Gordon Ellmers' photo shows this bird's eponymous but rarely-seen red belly.

SAAS Cuba trip in October exceeded expectations

By Joyce Miller, Newsletter Editor

Thirteen SAAS members visited Cuba from Oct. 14 to 23 on a trip organized by Holbrook Tours.

The group saw about 100 species of birds. Highlights included endemic Cuban species such as Bee Hummingbird (the world's smallest bird), Cuban Tody, Cuban Trogon, Cuban Solitaire, and Cuban Pewee. Endemic species are native to only a particular geographic area.

Some birds that breed in New York travel to Cuba for the winter. Some familiar birds spotted on this trip included hundreds of Turkey Vultures, many Palm Warblers, Northern Parula and Black-throated Blue Warblers, Catbirds and Northern Mockingbirds.

The tour started in Old Havana in northwestern Cuba. The group traveled south to the Zapata Swamp and Bay of Pigs area and then visited the dramatic karst limestone mountains of Viñales Valley before returning to Havana. Two professional guides accompanied the group: former high school English teacher Atila Perez and Xochitl Ayon Guemes, an ornithologist with the Museo Nacional de Historia Natural Cubana.



Above: The Bee Hummingbird, found only in Cuba, is the smallest bird in the world. The male has a brilliant turquoise back.

Two thrush species, relatives of our American Robin, were a treat to see. Left, a Cuban Solitaire enchanted the group with its ethereal song. Right, a Red-legged Thrush poses on one foot.

Photos: Laurie Murphy.



Here are reactions from some trip participants.

From Mark Silo:

Usually no one is too interested to hear about your vacation and will look for the exits if you try to show them your photos. But when we got home from Cuba we heard these questions over and over.

After a few such encounters, I realized that in response I invariably spoke of Cuba's culture and economy and not the fantastical birds: people who seemed uniquely jovial and welcoming; the ubiquitous music; major highways with little traffic and no trucks, but plenty of hitchhikers, walkers,

horseback riders and horse-drawn wagons; small fields with farmers plowing behind oxen; the tobacco farmer/cigar maker who told us he was obliged to sell 90% of his crop to the government at a low price, but laughingly added that he sent "maybe" 70 or 80%; the young English-speaking guy at the market who offered to trade for my shirt; the matrons at public restrooms who expected 100 pesos (maybe 40 cents) for handing you a few squares of toilet paper; the old cars.

I could go on at length and frequently did so. Truly a different and fascinating country and time machine.

Continued on page 5

Below: the scenic Bay of Pigs in southwestern Cuba offered snorkeling as well as birding.



Below: The group enjoys a dinner in the Zapata Swamp area with view of the Caribbean.



Cuba *Continued from Page 4*

From Lisa Ross:

I found the country to be in such a juxtaposition. It is beautiful but collapsing. It is progressive (woman's rights and gay marriage) but highly controlled. It is promoting tourism of foreigners but not the Cuban people. It is militaristic but allowing a black market. I found it so profoundly sad that the young Cubans are hopeless and want to leave. The country has such incredible beauty and could be doing so well with the right leadership. I hope that things improve for them soon.

My favorite memories are of Atila - how lucky we were to have him for a guide. His knowledge, enthusiasm and honesty were all things I will never forget.

From Laurie Murphy:

Having the expansive Zapata Swamp area all to ourselves while the sun was getting low and shining on a flock of flamingoes was an incredibly memorable experience.



Above: The handsome Blue-headed Quail-dove is a rare endemic species, found only in Cuba.

Right: The endemic Cuban Trogon is the national bird of Cuba.

Below: The SAAS group enjoyed lunch at an organic farm with views of the karst limestone outcroppings in the Viñales Valley. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is known as a tobacco-growing region.

Photos: Laurie Murphy.



Right: Guide Atila Perez helps the group jump over a stream along a trail, in search of more endemic birds. Photo: Laurie Murphy.

Below: The colorful Cuban Green Woodpecker is found only in Cuba. Photo: Laurie Murphy.

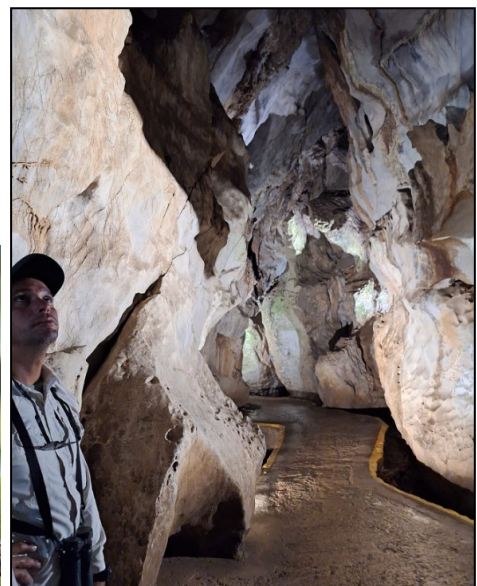


Below: Cuban Emerald hummingbird chicks sit in a nest at a Cuban nature preserve. Each is about the size of a Tic Tac candy. Photo: Laurie Murphy.



Above: The group visited a sanctuary for endangered Cuban Crocodiles. Photo: Joyce Miller.

Below: Guide Atila Perez looks at formations in a karst limestone cave in the Viñales Valley, west of Havana. Photo: Joyce Miller.





The SoBro Conservancy is creating a new bird-friendly urban pocket park at 209 South Broadway in Saratoga Springs. The organization strives to "conserve vacant urban parcels and transform them into pollinator-friendly green spaces." Photo: Rob Snell.

President's Message

SAAS working with SoBro on Saratoga park

By Rob Snell, SAAS President

Building a healthy, safe oasis for birds doesn't require a lot of space, just thoughtful plantings.

Evidence of this is visible at SoBro Conservancy's project at the corner of Broadway and Ballston Avenue in Saratoga Springs. This long vacant parcel of land is undergoing a green transformation that will continue into 2025, with the planting of native shade trees, grasses, shrubs and perennials.

Despite its size — just two-tenths of an acre — the space will be a valuable urban sanctuary for birds and other pollinators, providing food and shelter throughout the year.

SAAS plans to collaborate with SoBro Conservancy of Saratoga (<https://sobroconservancy.org/>) to help attract native birds as the project nears completion.

Fortunately, many of us can provide the same quality shelter and food for pollinators in our yards. Swapping ornamental and invasive plants for native species has a powerful effect on the sustainability of the environment.

Native plants house more insects for foraging birds. The berries of native shrubs have higher fat content than most ornamentals, making them an important energy source.

If you want more birds and butterflies in your yard, make the shift to natives. Remember, size doesn't matter — even small plots can be an important respite for weary birds.

If you believe your yard is already "bird friendly," complete our checklist at <https://www.southernadirondackaudubon.org/property>, and get a cool sign to display your efforts.

You can also find great information on that page about native plant gardening to help with your transformation.

Thanks for all you do to make your yard a healthier place for birds and other pollinators.

Climate Watch continues on Jan. 15

National Audubon Society's citizen science project Climate Watch resumes on Jan. 15. The survey is conducted twice a year, from Jan. 15 to Feb. 15 and May 15 to June 15.

Volunteers look specifically for Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches, to observe how those species are affected by climate change.

Using grid maps of a specific area, birders conduct 12 counts, observing for five minutes each. They also record the numbers and species of other birds identified within 100 meters.

Climate Watch started after National Audubon issued a report in 2014, *Birds and Climate Change*, on risks faced by North American bird species from climate change. SAAS joined the program in 2017. Contact Rob Snell (birdbrane1@gmail.com) for details and to participate.

Invasive insects found in Lake George basin

Infestations of Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) insects continue to be reported around the Lake George region. They arrived in New York State in the 1980s and were first found in the Adirondacks in 2017.

Here's a map of reported HWA infestations, from the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program: <https://www.adkinvasives.com/Invasive-Species/Detail/59>.

The insect damages Eastern and Carolina Hemlocks. As adult insects feed on the undersides of twigs, they accumulate a white, woolly substance. Infested hemlocks can be treated with several methods, including biologic controls.

Eastern Hemlock accounts for about 60% of total tree cover in the Lake George watershed, according to the [Invasive Species](#) page by the Lake George Land Conservancy.



Rob Snell

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.



Above: At the Greenwich Free Library, Grayson Gage is excited to go birding with his great grandmother, Evelyn Hoffman. In the background, Library Director Sarah Murphy tries out the binoculars that come with the backpack.

Right: Evalyn, Camilla and Natalie Bellosa show the contents of the birding backpack just delivered to the Argyle Free Library.

Birding backpacks now available in three more local libraries

In October, Birding Backpack project coordinator and SAAS treasurer Laurie Murphy delivered backpacks to three more libraries in the SAAS region.

The backpacks are now available to borrow from 14 libraries around the SAAS membership region. For more information about the backpacks, see <https://www.southernadirondackaudubon.org/education/>.



Above: On a sunny day at the Hudson Falls Free Library, Youth Services Coordinator Emily Forbes-Wood holds the new birding backpack. Standing with her are library user Greta Andrejkovics and Library Director Kay Hafner.

Photos: Laurie Murphy

SAAS Winter Raptor Safari set for Jan. 20

SAAS field trip coordinator John Loz will offer a **Winter Raptor Safari** on **Saturday, Jan. 20**.

The group will travel to various destinations within the Fort Edward Grasslands to look for Rough-legged Hawks, Northern Harriers, Snow Buntings, Horned Larks, Short-eared Owls and perhaps Snowy Owls. Short-eared Owls emerge from their roosting areas in tall grass near sunset.

The group will meet in at the Washington County Grasslands WMA parking area on Blackhouse Road to carpool. Please be very prepared for standing out in cold, windy weather conditions and carpooling with others. Bring a mask if you like - it's not only a safety and preventative measure, but will keep your face warm.

[Email John Loz to register.](#)



A Short-eared Owl looks for prey in the Fort Edward Grasslands area. Photo: Gordon Ellmers.

Details will also be posted on the SAAS Facebook and web pages. The snow/rain date is January 27.

Look for Lanternfly eggs this winter

Late fall and winter are good times to look for the brown egg masses of Spotted Lanternfly (*Lycorma del-icatula*), an invasive species that is slowly spreading into upstate New

York State. They have caused damage to grapes, maples and other important species.

The gray-brown egg masses are about 1.5 inches long and contain up to 50 eggs. Check for the egg masses on tree trunks and branches as well as fences, vehicles and any flat surfaces. For more information, see <https://www.nyimainvasives.org/slf>.

More information about this insect is found on the website "Spotted Lanternfly Management" (<https://cals.cornell.edu/new-york-state-integrated-pest-management/outreach-education/whats-bugging-you/spotted-lanternfly/spotted-lanternfly-management>) from Cornell University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. This N.Y.S. Integrated Pest Management page offers photos of the insect and eggs and tips on destroying the egg masses.



Featured birding trails

Roosevelt Truck Trail: An “enchanted” boreal forest

*By Mark Silo
SAAS Board member*

Late September brought an opportunity to walk the Roosevelt Truck Trail with a small group of birders from our neighbors in Northern New York Audubon (NNYA).

This beautiful and little-used trail runs 2.5 miles from Route 28N to the Blue Ridge Road, a few miles east of Newcomb in Essex County. One of my NNYA companions called this wild stretch of boreal forest “enchanted” - and it surely is.

The trail itself is a former road that is quickly returning to a forested state, save for the herd paths of visitors and a well-used stretch at the south end. It is surprisingly level for the High Peaks neighborhood, traversing just a few low ridges.

Our leader, Joan Collins, is a long-tenured Adirondack guide, a superb birder and naturalist, and a woman who brightly conveys an infectious joy at being outdoors. In addition to her work with NNYA, Collins runs Adirondack Avian Expeditions (<https://www.adirondackavianexpeditions.com>).

While it was not a banner day for birding, we did get excellent looks and listens to a couple of northern celebrities: one Black-backed Woodpecker and several Boreal Chickadees among a list of 24 species.

Top left: The trail’s lush forest floor.

Top right and right: The Roosevelt Truck Trail is a former road and a bit overgrown.

Below right: The Stop sign and metal gate marks one end of the trail.

Trail photos: Mark Silo

Below: The Boreal Chickadee has a brown cap and a more nasal call than the more familiar Black-capped Chickadee.

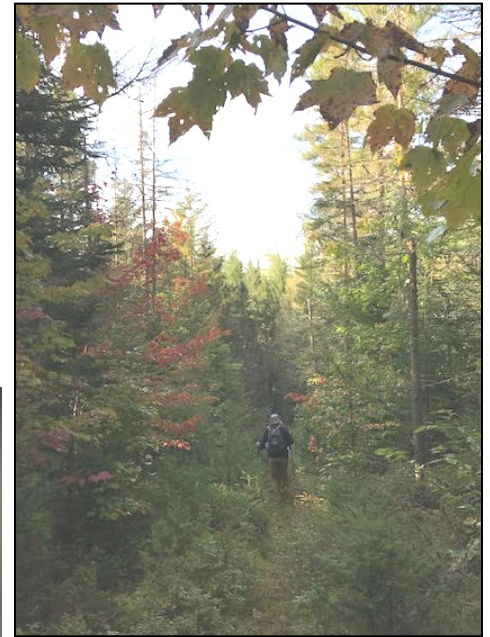
Photo: Tim Bowman, Anchorage, Alaska, Audubon Digital Asset Management, 2019



We also enjoyed a very cool transportation service: a van provided by NNYA and the Town of Long Lake that dropped the group off at the northern trailhead and, 3.5 hours later, picked us up at the southern trailhead. What a luxury!

The Roosevelt Truck Trail is only an 80-mile trip from Saratoga Springs and brings one into that enchanted boreal realm with its unique residents. It is highly recommended, as is any opportunity to get out in the woods with Joan Collins. But if you choose to go there, make sure to get good directions as both trailheads are unmarked and hard to find.

- For the list of 63 bird species seen at



the Roosevelt Truck Trail, see this eBird page: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L4986726>. The Bar Charts link on that page shows which months each species were seen.

- For Collin’s account with directions and photos of an earlier trip, see <https://www.adirondackhub.com/story/2015/08/boreal-wonderland-roosevelt-truck-trail>.

About Wildflowers

Common Mullein

By Diane Collins

Maybe you've been curious about this tall, statuesque plant with a dense spike of yellow flowers and large velvety leaves. Many think of it as "just a weed," but that's not so. Its history tells a different story.

Mulleins have been appreciated since ancient times. Romans and subsequent civilizations dipped the dried plant in fat and lit it to make ceremonial torches, or candelaria. It was called Candlewick Plant and used for light.

The plant came to America with 18th century settlers as a useful medical plant. It is able to thrive in dry poor soil and bright sunlight. Long downy leaves wind around the stem and point upward to catch the rain and move it down to thirsty roots. It



Common Mullein (*Verbascum Thapsus*) Photos: Diane Collins.

spreads by seeds.

The flowers bloom sequentially to attract many fertilizing pollinators over time.

Mullein has many common names describing its uses. One is Velvet Plant. Its soft velvety leaves were used to line footwear for comfort.

The leaves were also used as flannel and gently rubbed on sore joints for warmth and soothing. The common name "mullein" comes from the Latin *mollis* which means soft. Another of its names is Lungwort, important for treating lung disease. Leaves were dried to make mullein tea for coughs and colds.

Many wildflowers include the word Common in their common name. This relates to plants frequently found in gardens or on the

"commons" for the use of the community as a whole. With its many benefits, the mullein plant was a big hit!

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.

Species Spotlight

Common Merganser

By Joyce Miller, SAAS Newsletter Editor

In winter, Common Mergansers (*Mergus merganser*) are often spotted diving in unfrozen rivers and lakes in our region, looking for fish, mollusks, insects or amphibians.

These ducks have narrow, serrated bills, which make it easier to grab slippery prey. They usually dive for about 30 seconds, but can hunt underwater for up to two minutes.

Males have glossy dark green heads, bright orange bills, black backs and bright white bodies. From a distance, they might be mistaken for Common Loons. Common Loons have larger, heavier black heads and bills.

Female Common Mergansers look quite different, with shaggy brick-red crests, duller orange bills and grayish bodies. Both males and females have orange legs and feet.

When courting, a male will swim in

circles near a female. The pair usually nests in a tree cavity such as an old woodpecker nest hole. The female lays eight to 12 eggs.

In spring, chicks will often hop onto their mother's back for a safe ride. Ducklings eat aquatic insects at first, then graduate to small fish.

Common Mergansers are found across North America, Europe and Asia, breeding in the northern climates and wintering in the relatively warmer southern regions. Because they are found in a wide geographic area, the populations are not believed to be under threat.



Male and female Common Mergansers are a common sight on the Hudson River in winter. Photo: Gordon Ellmers.

In the winter, Saratoga Lake and the Hudson River (between Fort Edward and Schuylerville) are good locations to spot Common Mergansers, along with Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead and Hooded Mergansers.

For more about this duck, see Cornell's All About Birds site, https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Common_Merganser/overview.



Great Horned Owls, Bald Eagles and Common Ravens can start breeding activity during winter months (<https://ebird.org/atlasny/about/breeding-calendar>). Great Horned Owl photo courtesy of Peter Emmett/Audubon Photography Awards.

Breeding Bird Atlas 2023 wrap-up

By Alison Van Keuren, Regional Coordinator, Capital Region, N.Y. S. Breeding Bird Atlas III

Here is a summary to date of Saratoga, Warren and Washington County portions of the NY Breeding Bird Atlas III.

Saratoga County has 32 Priority Blocks with 11 marked as complete. There is one in the queue, Niskayuna NW, for final review by the project director.

Here is an example of a block that can not be placed into the queue. Saratoga Springs NW, has over 150 hours of documented visits, yet not enough Probable or Confirmed and needs more mid to late summer visits.

Warren County has 35 Priority Blocks with five marked complete. Two blocks, Lake Luzerne NW and Warrensburg NW, are in queue for final review.

One block, Gore Mountain CE, has a peculiar set of difficulties. Most of the checklists were submitted during the ski season. This block needs more visits and application of breeding codes during the breeding season. Hikers, here is where you can make a very important contribution to the atlas effort.

Washington County has 31 priority blocks with 12 marked as complete. Three blocks, Hoosick Falls NW, Schaghticoke NW and Schuylerville NW are in queue for final review.

These counties have many priority blocks that are close to being complete. The Breeding Bird Atlas coordinators thank all of you for your ef-

forts and ask that you extend your birding to areas beyond your "local patch" to help them across the finish line. More to follow as the breeding season approaches.

Thanks to all.

For more information about the NYSBBA III project, see <https://ebird.org/atlasny/home>. Atlas surveys are held every 20 years; 2024 will be the last of this five-year project.

Renew or join and get a chance to win this poster!

If you join as a chapter supporter or renew your membership by the end of this year, you'll receive three raffle entries to win Diana Rebman's photo below. It won the 2018 Audubon Photo Award Top 100.

Chapter memberships are only \$15 and run for a year. An additional ticket will be allotted for every \$5 donated through the SAAS membership or donation page.

This Long-tailed Tit, a cousin of our Black-capped Chickadee, was photographed in Akan-Mashu National Park in Japan. This photo, on national tour in 2019, is approximately 36" wide by 24" tall, mounted on foam



The best is yet to come

By Judy Staubo, SAAS Board Member

We end our 40th anniversary with our sights set on the future.

Perhaps it is a bit early for resolutions, but we are inviting you to join us in some of the exciting events and projects we will carry into the new year and beyond.

One of the best benefits of your Southern Adirondack Audubon Society (SAAS) membership is the newsletter you are now reading. Here you can learn about bird walks and presentations at local libraries. You can keep up with our very successful and in-demand Birding Backpack project. Thirteen have been distributed with almost twice that many to go. You can track the progress of our efforts to erect Motus tracking stations. Don't miss the articles on birds and wildflowers. Learn how to create a bird-friendly garden. Be sure to read *The Fledging* every quarter!

We also hope you will make an early resolution and step forward to make a contribution to SAAS, joining us in our efforts to serve you...and the birds. It is a great time to make a \$40 for 40 contribution or to sponsor or partly sponsor a Birding Backpack.

Please visit the SAAS Donation page (<https://www.southernadirondackaudubon.org/donate/>). Or, make checks payable to Southern Adirondack Audubon Society and mail to P.O. Box 5044, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866. Many thanks.

board, and can be hung as is.

Contributions support SAAS's educational and conservation activities in our region. Many National members also become chapter supporter members to financially support SAAS's local efforts.

Renew your annual membership now for 2024 at the SAAS Membership page (<https://www.southernadirondackaudubon.org/membership/>).

This photo, of a Long-tailed Tit in Japan, will be awarded at the end of December.