



The Fledgling

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

Vol. 41 No. 3, **March — May 2024**

Now in our 41st Year!

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

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

For spring: Turtles, owls and beavers

Several in-person programs will be held across the SAAS membership area this spring.

Wildlife rehabilitator Debbie Philp will present “Adirondack Turtles” twice this spring for SAAS:

- **Saturday, March 16** at 11:00 a.m., at the Galway Public Library in Saratoga County;
- **Wednesday May 22** at 7:00 p.m. at the Greenwich Free Library in Washington County, as SAAS’s regular monthly program.

The program will offer a glimpse into the lives of freshwater turtles and their unique history and anatomy. Philp will bring “ambassador turtles” from the Adirondacks

Spring Programs:

March:

- **Saturday, March 16, 11:00 a.m.** - Galway Public Library. “Adirondack Turtles”
- **Tuesday, March 26, 7:00 p.m.** - Saratoga Springs Public Library. Screech Owls (Monthly Program)
- **Saturday, March 30, 11:00 a.m.** - Greenwich Free Library. Beginner Birding Workshop (see p. 3)

April:

- **Thursday, April 18, 6:00 p.m.** Galway Public Library. Beginner Birding Workshop (see page 3)
- **Wednesday, April 24, 7:00 p.m.** - Greenwich Free Library - “Dam It! Beavers and Why They Are Dam Important” (Monthly program)

May:

- **Saturday, May 11, 11:00 a.m.** - Caldwell-Lake George Library. “Dam It! Beavers and Why They Are Dam Important”
- **Wednesday May 22, 7:00 p.m.** - Greenwich Free Library. “Adirondack Turtles” (Monthly program)



and beyond. She’ll talk about why turtles are disappearing and how to ensure turtles are around for generations to come.

Philp is a N.Y.S. licensed wildlife rehabilitator and the founder of Dancing Turtle Rescue, a small nonprofit dedicated to saving native freshwater turtles and their wetland habitats. Philp is a certified master herpetologist and brings a strong background in natural history to her public education programs.

She shares her home with rescued pets including 15 turtles, a lizard, a snake, and two frogs, in addition to her licensed educational ambassadors and any injured native turtles in care. Philp is a member of North Country Wild Care, a network of wildlife rehabilitators in northeastern New York, and is currently serving as president.

On **Tuesday, March 26**, author Jim Wright will offer the talk “**All About Screech Owls**” at 7:00 p.m. at the Saratoga Spring Public Library. He’ll discuss his book, *The*

Author Jim Wright will talk about Screech Owls on March 26 at the Saratoga Springs Library.

Screech Owl Companion from Timber Press. He will have copies of his book available for sale and will sign them. Silent Wings Raptors Rehab and Education (<https://silentwingsraptors.org>) will bring a live Screech Owl to the program. Register in advance at <https://sspl.libcal.com/event/11588553>.

Screech owls are the owl most likely to nest in a backyard, but few people know how to entice them to move in—or how to thwart those squirrel interlopers, Wright said.

Booklist magazine says: “Screech owls are enchanting neighbors, as journalist and birding columnist Wright discovered when he and his wife installed an owl nest box 50 feet from their living room. These ‘most amazing creatures you’ll seldom see’ are the stars of this combination of natural history and how-to book.”

Lillian Stokes, coauthor of *The Stokes Field Guide to the Birds of North America* says that this book “delivers everything you could want or need to welcome these appealing, diminutive, feathery, fierce creatures as your neighbors.”

Wright is a blogger, freelance writer, and birding columnist for *The Record* in northern New Jersey, as well as deputy marsh warden for the Celery Farm Natural Area in Allendale, N.J.. His other books include the biography *The Real James Bond*, large-format books about Central America’s largest rainforest, Pennsylvania’s legendary Hawk Mountain, and the New Jersey Meadowlands.

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Southern Adirondack Audubon Society

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Board and Committees

Officers

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

Board of Directors

2022-2024	Judy Staubo Laurie Murphy OPEN
2023-2025	Dusty Caldwell Mark Silo Deb Ferguson
2024-2026	Paul Lundberg Joyce Miller

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@southernadirondackaudubon.org)
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 volunteers

Lily Acierno and Carissa Pienkowski

Students have started a new Audubon chapter at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs. Lily Acierno and Carissa Pienkowski lead the efforts. See page 8 for Acierno's article about the new chapter.

Lily Acierno, from Bayport on Long Island, is a sophomore biology major at Skidmore College. She minors in Spanish and math, and is currently raising and training a future assistance dog for the Guide Dog Foundation while living in a dorm on campus.

She grew up near a county park with a small lake. "Ever since I was young, my dad beckoned me to use his heavy binoculars to watch the Osprey as they circled and dove for fish. As I got older, I became infatuated with learning to identify birds myself."

Last summer, she worked for the Suffolk County Parks Endangered Species Program, where she spent every day monitoring Piping Plovers, Least Terns, and American Oystercatchers across beaches on Long Island. After Skidmore, she plans to do field work and go to graduate school to become an ornithologist.

Acierno said she loves seeing her birding knowledge grow with every experience. "From seeing a lifer to finally being able to tell those two similar-looking warblers apart without a guide, birding has taught me patience and the value of the little things in life. Learning about my surrounding environment through birding is an amazing way to appreciate and connect with nature," she said.

"As someone who is passionate about birds and their conservation, I felt that having a birding club on Skidmore's campus was incredibly important. That's when I met Carissa Pienkowski, a senior at Skidmore, who had just registered our college to have an Audubon Chapter,"



Skidmore Audubon chapter founders: Lily Acierno (in red, holding a goose) and Carissa Pienkowski (in blue). Photos courtesy of Lily Acierno.

said Acierno. "Being the President of the Audubon Chapter in its first year of activity has been an incredible opportunity to spread birding knowledge as well as take on a leadership role on campus."

"In the future, we are planning to have events that can interest birders at any level. Field guide and identification workshops for beginners can help new or curious birders become involved,"

Acierno said. "Connections to projects with Skidmore professors can help students gain valuable field experience. Conservation and awareness events such as birdhouse building and feeder making will ensure we are making a positive impact and making our campus as a whole more bird-friendly!"

Carissa Pienkowski, from Syracuse, is a senior pre-veterinary biology major.



She also participates in student government and research in the animal physiology program.

"I got into birding because I've always had a passion for conservation and I volunteered at my local zoo when I was

younger. There was a parrot named Simon there who spiked my interest and curiosity on the amazing-ness of birds," she said. "What I enjoy most about birding is looking at the uniqueness of each and every bird, from their behavior to their colors to their calls. They're all so different and you never know what you're going to find, so I love the element of wonder and curiosity they bring to the world."

"I started the chapter because I found myself birding every weekend. At home, I'm a part of my local Audubon and thought maybe there would be a birder community at Skidmore, so it would be fun to start one and spread the love of birds and create a nice sense of community," Pienkowski said. "Audubon has been a remarkable outlet for me to make change in the birding world. I'm so excited to continue studying ornithology after graduating from Skidmore."

The students have also participated in SAAS field trips and events.



Above An American Beaver.
(Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons, Steve from Washington DC. American Beaver, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3963858>.)

Spring programs

Continued from page 1

Joseph Sendzik will offer the talk **“Dam It! Beavers and Why They Are Dam Important,”** on two dates:

- **Wednesday, April 24** at 7:00 p.m. at the Greenwich Free Library in Washington County as SAAS’s monthly public program, and
- **Saturday, May 11** at 11:00 a.m. at Caldwell-Lake George Library in Lake George Village.

The presentation covers the historical importance of beavers and the fur trade; beaver behavior, habitats, and the natural history of the beaver; and beaver-human conflicts and conflict resolution.

Sendzik is the Trail Maintenance Chair for the Albany Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club. He enjoys hiking, trail running, swimming, and paddling in the Adirondacks. He has a passion for learning about wildlife and local history and sharing that passion with others.



Left: Joseph Sendzik will offer two talks about beavers this spring. Photo courtesy of J. Sendzik.

SAAS offering beginner birding workshops

Join SAAS board members Mark Silo and John Loz as they present two Beginner Birding Workshops this spring:

- **Saturday, March 30, 11:00 a.m.** at Greenwich Free Library, Greenwich, Washington County.
- **Thursday, April 18, 6:00 p.m.** at Galway Public Library, Galway, Saratoga County.

The program will focus on how to use binoculars properly, recommend the best field guides and birding phone apps, and show registrants how to identify different bird species. The program will start indoors with a 20-minute presentation with time to ask questions. Attendees will then head outdoors to practice what they learned. The group will look for birds, practice using binoculars, and learn to look for diagnostic field marks on birds. A limited supply of extra binoculars will be on hand to borrow, so please bring your own if you have them.

To register, contact the location closest to you. More Beginner Birding workshops will be offered at different libraries during the summer and fall.

Spring field trips

SAAS is planning several field trips this spring. See the Field Trip guidelines on page 4 for guidance.

- **First Saturday Bird Walks** continue each month with Ray Perry. See article on page 4.
- **In April**, SAAS will lead a **Bog Meadow field trip** in Saratoga County, date and time to be decided. Check the SAAS website and Facebook pages for details.
- **Saturday, May 4, 2:00 p.m.**—**Betar Byway Wildflower & Bird Walk**, South Glens Falls. Wildflower expert Diane Collins and bird trip leader Joyce Miller will offer a walk. 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
- **Sunday, May 26, 9:30 a.m.** - **Betar Byway Bird Walk**, South Glens Falls. Joyce Miller will lead a walk along this trail along the Hudson River. Meet at the gazebo. See May 2 event for details.
- SAAS President Rob Snell will lead two field trips at 8:00 a.m. in Saratoga County. For details, contact Snell at birdbrane1@gmail.com: **Friday May 31**, to **Boice Family Park** in Rock City Falls, and **Friday, June 7**, to **Saratoga Battlefield** in Stillwater.



Basic birding equipment (Photo courtesy of John Loz)

binoculars and water and wear comfortable walking shoes. The round-trip walk is about two miles long and will last about two hours. For details on the trail and a potential bird species list, see:

<https://www.southernadirondackaudubon.org/betar-byway/>. Register by emailing

Miller (editor@southernadirondackaudubon.org). Steady rain or predicted thunderstorms will cancel. If walks are canceled due to inclement weather, registrants will be notified by email the evening before the walk.

Diane Collins is *The Fledgling's* wildflower columnist. Copies of her latest book, *Springtime Birds & Wildflowers along the Betar Byway, South Glens Falls*, will be available for \$10 at the walks.

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Spring field trips

Continued from page 3

Crown Point Bird Walk on May 12

SAAS program chair John Loz will lead a **Crown Point Bird Walk and Banding Station Visit** on **Sunday, May 12**, with an afternoon trip to **Dead Creek Wildlife Refuge** in Addison, Vermont. It will promptly start at 8:00 a.m.

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.

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

Birding in the Perkins Clearing area in Speculator. Photo: John Loz.



Birds & Beer Summer Safari on June 2

On **Sunday June 2**, join SAAS field trips chair John Loz and N.Y.S. licensed guides Michael and Wanda Moccio on a carpool driving safari into the **Perkins Clearing** area above Speculator, Hamilton County.

This carpool adventure will look for Mourning, Chestnut-sided, Blackburnian, Canada, and other warblers, as well as other mixed woodland and field bird species.

The trip starts at 7:30 a.m. at the Mason Lake parking area on the west (left) side of Route 30, north of Speculator. The trip will last about five or six hours. The group will make many stops along the way to observe wildlife along the road. In perhaps two spots, the group will walk for a total of a half-mile to and from a grassland habitat. After the safari, the group will gather for a late lunch and libations at the Lemon Tree Brewery in Speculator to celebrate their sightings. Please be prepared: bring snacks, water, sunscreen, bug repellent, hat, netting for bugs, and binoculars.

The trip is limited to 10 attendees. Registration is required; please email Loz at programs@southernadirondackaudubon.org.



Red-bellied Woodpeckers are seen year-round on the Spring Run Trail. Photo: Gordon Ellmers.

First Saturday Bird Walks continue in Saratoga Springs

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. Walks start at 8:00 a.m. on these Saturdays: **March 2, April 6 and May 4**.

So far, 130 bird species have been reported 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/>).



Left: Wood Ducks pairs start breeding in March. The female lays eggs in a tree cavity up to 60 feet high. After hatching, chicks jump out of the nest hole and follow the female to water.

Photo: Audubon DAM, Aud_APA-2019_Wood-Duck_A1-9392-3_GSL_Photo-Shannon-Phifer

Join the last year of the Breeding Bird Atlas!

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

March is the start of the final season for the New York State Breeding Bird Atlas III. Help is needed from all of you.

My area of interest is the Capital Region and includes Saratoga, Warren and Washington counties. Check the Atlas website or with the Northern Regional Coordinator (nybba3.northern@gmail.com) for the other counties in the Southern Adirondack Audubon membership area.

The Atlas is structured so that there are priority blocks. The Atlas Steering Committee has decided that there are to be two tiers of Priority Blocks. CE [Center East] is the highest priority. When you plan your outings, please go to CE first and do all that you can to complete them.

A block needs 15 hours of observations between May 15 and July 15 to be considered complete.

Here are a few examples of CE Blocks that need special attention:

Saratoga County:

- Ohmer Mountain CE has 11.25 hours with 10 probable and two confirmed species.

Warren County:

- Chestertown CE has 4.85 hours.
- Gore Mountain CE has 65.88 hours with one probable and zero confirmed species. Most visits are in winter. Hiking trails can

be accessed in the spring and summer.

- Harrisburg CE has 0.43 hours with eight probable and one confirmed species.
- Johnsbury CE has 2.45 hours with five probable and two confirmed species.
- North Creek CE has 0.72 hours with zero probable and two confirmed species.
- Stony Creek CE has 1.83 hours with 13 probable and two confirmed species.

Washington County:

- Cambridge CE has 4.82 hours.
- Putnam CE has 1.37 hours with eight probable and five confirmed species.
- Salem CE has 3.02 hours of effort.

As we progress into March, more birds will be moving into our area and will be demonstrating breeding behavior. Here are some species that are or will start breeding in March: Canada Goose, Wood Duck, American Wigeon, Hooded Merganser, Ruffed Grouse, Spruce Grouse, Wild Turkey, Mourning Dove, Sandhill Crane, Killdeer, American Woodcock, Great Blue Heron, Osprey, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Northern Goshawk, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Eastern Screech-Owl, Long-eared Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, American Three-toed Woodpecker, Black-backed Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, American Kestrel, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Canada Jay, Fish Crow, American Crow, Common Raven, Horned Lark, White-breasted Nuthatch, European Starling, Eastern Bluebird,

Climate Walk on May 18 in Glens Falls

A Climate Action Walk will be held on Saturday, May 18 at 1:00 p.m. in Glens Falls. The event advocates for the cessation of burning fossil fuels.

It will start downtown in City Park and progress north along Route 9 (Glen Street) to Crandall Park.

At the Crandall Park bandshell, climate action advocates will speak. Various organizations will offer informational tables.

Among the community supporters are Glens Falls Unitarian Universalist Social Action Committee, St. Mary's Social Justice Ministry, North Country Earth Action, Glens Falls Presbyterian Earth Care Committee, Rivers & Mountains Green Faith, Third Act Upstate New York, Zero Waste Warren County, NAACP Glens Falls Chapter, Beyond Plastics, and other churches, temples, organizations and school groups.

Contact Diane Collins at dc.wildflowers@gmail.com for more information about the event.

American Robin, House Sparrow, House Finch, Red Crossbill, White-winged Crossbill, Pine Siskin, Song Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, and Northern Cardinal.

This information is taken from the NY Breeding Guideline Bar Chart: https://is-ebird-wordpress-prod-s3.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/79/2020/01/Breeding-Guideline-Bar-Chart_20200131.pdf.

If you have any questions or need help with block maps or other information from the NY Breeding Bird Atlas web page (<https://ebird.org/atlasny/home>), please contact me at aev12159@gmail.com.

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

SAAS plans Panama trip in February 2025

SAAS is organizing a trip to Panama from February 1 to 8, 2025, through Holbrook Tours. The trip is \$3,450 excluding airfare, with limited single rooms available for \$375. The limit is 8 to 12 participants.

Panama boasts the highest diversity of bird species in Central America. The country's location at the convergence of two continents makes it the prime respite for migratory birds from both North and South America.

The group will bird in two distinct regions: the tropical rainforests bordering the Panama Canal, and the midlands and highlands of Chiriquí Province in western Panama.

The trip includes visits to noteworthy birding hotspots like Pipeline Road, seeing the Panama Canal's Miraflores Locks in action, and spending eight days immersed in the country's culture



Left: Fiery-throated Hummingbird. Photo by Debbie Jordan of Holbrook Tours. Below: Birding in Gamboa Rainforest. Photo by Javier Losa.



and natural landscapes. Highlights include:

- Hiking the world-famous Pipeline Road, where target species include Black Hawk-Eagle, Purple-throated Fruitcrow, Masked Tityra, and hundreds of others.
- Scaling the Panama Rainforest Discovery Center's 130-foot tower for the chance to see upper canopy species, including the coveted Blue Cotinga.
- Searching for Resplendent Quetzals in Volcán Barú National Park and on the Pipeline Trail in Boquete, near Costa Rica's border.

- Visiting Panama's highest elevation natural wetlands at Las Lagunas, 4,000 feet above sea level, to see Masked Duck, Chiriquí Yellowthroat, and Crested Guan.

See the trip website for details: <https://holbrook.travel/saas-pa24>. For more information, contact SAAS president Rob Snell (birdbrane1@gmail.com).

Christmas Bird Count results for 2023

By Linda White, SAAS CBC Compiler

On December 16, an intrepid group of birders headed into their respective count areas of the Hudson Falls Christmas Bird Count circle, counting each bird seen or heard. They traveled over 346 miles and walked 21.5 miles.

The weather was very favorable for a count, with temperatures in the low 40's, no snow, and only partial freezing in open water.

Three new species were added to the count list this year: Osprey, Winter Wren, and Green-winged Teal. The count has been held since 1983

Another very exciting observation was a leucistic Red-tailed Hawk. It's all white, missing the usual feather pigmentation, but not albino. These are quite rare for our area.

Total: 60 species

Canada Goose—2,075, American Black Duck—79, Mallard—136, Bufflehead—16, Common Goldeneye—109, Hooded Merganser—48, Common Merganser—93, Ring-necked Pheasant—1, Great Blue Heron—9,



Jacquie Tinker snapped this shot of a leucistic Red-tailed Hawk in Kingsbury during the 2023 Christmas Bird Count.

Black Vulture—1, Turkey Vulture—1, Northern Harrier—3, Sharp-shinned Hawk—1, Cooper's Hawk—4, Ring-billed Gull—62, Herring Gull—4, Rock Pigeon—528, Mourning Dove—82.

Barred Owl—1, Short-eared Owl—3, Belted Kingfisher—7, Red-bellied Woodpecker—21, Hairy Woodpecker—9, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker—3, Downy Woodpecker—45, Northern Flicker—1, Pileated Woodpecker—9.

American Kestrel—2, Peregrine Falcon—1, Blue Jay—140, American

Crow—1,463, Common Raven—6, Horned Lark—37, Black-capped Chickadee—180, Tufted Titmouse—97, Red-breasted Nuthatch—4, White-breasted Nuthatch—70.

Brown Creeper—7, Carolina Wren—23, Golden-crowned Kinglet—17, Eastern Bluebird—68, American Robin—25, Northern Mockingbird—18, European Starling—2,995.

American Tree Sparrow—20, Dark-eyed Junco—207, Winter Wren—1, White-throated Sparrow—11, Song Sparrow—6, Northern Cardinal—96, Red-winged Blackbird—13, House Finch—20, Pine Siskin—86, American Goldfinch—16, House Sparrow—79, Fox Sparrow—1, Osprey—1, Screech Owl—1 (during Count Week), Green-winged Teal—1 (during Count Week).

A huge shout-out and thank-you to our bird crew: Sue Nealon, Beth, Brad, and Nathan Bidwell, Jeff Gardiner, Russ Hillard, Steven Farr, Sue Pierce, Pat Fitzgerald, Joyce Miller, Jim McLaughlin, Mike Rivette, Rob Snell, Nick Logan, Jacquie Tinker, Vicki Bocketti, Helen Crawshaw and Linda White (count compiler).

President's Message

Birding benefits

By Rob Snell, SAAS President

According to the National Institute of Health, exposure to sunlight in the morning stimulates our bodies to produce serotonin, which has been shown to noticeably improve our moods.

If you've been birding on a sunny morning, you have likely noticed that birds appear to be "happiest" in strong sunlight too, singing their hearts out, even during the winter. Improved mood is not the only benefit that comes from birding on a nice morning, however.



Birding has been linked to several other beneficial outcomes as well, including stress reduction, physical fitness, mental stimulation, conservation awareness, and community engagement.

Moreover, birding is an excellent educational activity for both children and adults. It encourages learning about bird species, their habitats, migration patterns and conservation efforts — hopefully, leading to a greater sense of responsibility for nature and conservation.

This spring, improve your well-being and understanding of nature, by getting out your binoculars and going birding.

Join one of the many guided field trips that SAAS offers, from a walk on the Betar Byway to a Saturday morning on the Spring Run Trail.

If you don't have binoculars, you can borrow one of our birding backpacks from our local library and take a friend or child out with you. It's not only healthy, it's FUN! I hope to see you out there.



Left: On Feb. 1, the Ballston Community Public Library in Burnt Hills received a birding backpack, shown with Library Director Rebecca Verhagden, Head of Youth Services Alyssa Harvey and Head of Adult Services Jenn Richard. Photos: Laurie Murphy.

Birding backpacks now in 16 libraries

The Corinth Free Library in Saratoga County is the 16th area library to join in SAAS's Birding Backpack project. Coordinator and SAAS treasurer Laurie Murphy delivered backpacks to three more libraries in the SAAS region this winter. The backpacks are now available to borrow from these libraries around the SAAS membership region:

- Caldwell-Lake George Library
- Saratoga Springs Public Library
- Galway Public Library
- Ballston Spa Public Library
- The Richards Library in Warrensburg
- Town of Chester Public Library in Chestertown
- Lake Pleasant Public Library in Speculator
- Bolton Free Library in Bolton Landing
- Bancroft Public Library in Salem
- Argyle Free Library
- Hudson Falls Free Library
- Greenwich Free Library
- Town of Johnsburg Library in North Creek
- Corinth Free Library
- Ballston Community Public Library in Burnt Hills
- Horicon Free Public Library in Brant Lake.

Each birding backpack contains two pairs of durable 10×42 Celestron Outland binoculars, instruction



Above, Corinth Free Library director Rebecca Fasulo is pictured with the backpack her library received on Jan. 29.

books, a "Rite in the Rain" birding journal, *Birds of New York* folding laminated guide, bird bingo cards, a *Birding Adventures for Kids* book and a customized page listing local birding spots. For details about the backpacks, see <https://www.southernadironackaudubon.org/education/>.



Check SAAS's Facebook page and website for updated and new event information!

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.

New Audubon chapter at Skidmore College

By Lily Acierno,
Skidmore Campus Audubon Chapter
President

Skidmore College's new Audubon Campus Chapter is providing students with regular opportunities to get involved with the birding community. Currently in its first year as an active club, the chapter has worked closely with SAAS to get students to learn more about birds and the local ecosystem.

Since September, the club has offered many birding walks and moved forward with some important campus initiatives. A long-time problem the college has faced is window-strike bird deaths. Because of the many dorms and lecture buildings on campus, birds are frequently found injured or dead after crashing into windows.

The Skidmore Audubon Chapter started off the year with a window-cling making event, where students could design their own stickers to add visibility to the large windows found in each dorm room.

Aside from the hope to make this initiative more widespread across campus, the Chapter hopes to plant more native, bird-friendly plants around campus and install birdboxes in woods just north of campus.

Working with the Audubon Society has provided members with unique opportunities to initiate change on a national scale. In October, the Skidmore Audubon Chapter sent three of its members to Washington D.C., where they met with their state representatives to push for stronger protection of forage fish and coastal wetlands. These policies were selected by the Audubon Society as priorities to protect the habitat and food sources of sea and shorebirds. It was an incredible opportunity for students to learn about conservation and the importance of their role in national policy.

Sophomore Anna Siddiqui, a member of Skidmore Audubon Chapter, states that she joined the club to gain more knowledge about birds. "I've always been fascinated with birds but never knew how to get started as I



Above, the new club's logo.
Below, Lily Acierno, Skidmore
Campus Audubon Chapter
President.



had little birding experience," Anna remarks.

"This club gave me the opportunity to explore birding at a beginner level and grow a passion for it." Since Anna joined in September, she has been on several bird walks and has begun learning IDs. "I have loved being a part of this club, and I can't wait to see what's next for it!"

Having a campus chapter provides opportunities specific to students that a non-campus affiliated chapter does not provide, making it even more vital for the campus to have. It frequently acts as a liaison between professors and students, offering research opportunities, access to a large avian specimen collection, and endless resources for students to advance their learning. Biologists, conservationists, nature-enthusiasts, and more can find community with the addition of the chapter. Skidmore's extensive trails and forested area within the North Woods as well as its proximity to Adirondack Park make it a prime location for such a chapter.

It is exciting to see so many young



Above: The North Woods of Skidmore College offer good birding in all seasons. Photos courtesy of Lily Acierno. For a map of the North Woods, see <https://www.skidmore.edu/sustainability/programs/northwoods/index.php>.

people interested in birding and aiding in the Audubon Society's conservation efforts. The college will be sure to see long-lasting changes to its campus as the chapter moves it toward more bird-friendly living.

Climate Watch for spring

National Audubon Society's citizen science project Climate Watch continues from May 15 to June 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. Observers perform 12 five-minute point counts on a specific route.

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 more information.

About Wildflowers

Yarrow

By Diane Collins, Wildflower Columnist

Almost as soon as the snow has melted, the first we see of Common Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) are its bipinnate feathery leaves sprouting from the earth. Several months later come the flower clusters. Keep an eye out while birding in late March, early April, or make it a treasure hunt with kids along an open sandy trail in Cole's Woods.

This perennial wildflower blooms from May through September. The lacy foliage is sought by birds for nest material. Studies have suggested that yarrow material in nests may inhibit bird parasites. Yarrow is in the Composite family, a highly-developed form of plant life in which each flower is composed of disc and ray florets.

Each floret is actually a small flower making its own pollen and seeds. The abundance of flower clusters on



Common yarrow. Photo: Diane Collins.

one stem and the long flowering season guarantees pollination. Common yarrow spreads by self-sowing and underground stems.

Mostly an "introduced" wildflower, yarrow was brought by settlers for a multitude of medicinal uses. The only true "native" is Siberian yarrow (*A.*

sibirica) found in Alaska and the northwest. The best-known use of yarrow was healing wounds and stopping bleeding. This explains its other common names: soldier's woundwort, staunchweed, and nose-bleed. Pharmacists have extracted an alkaloid chemical from the plant calling it achillein, after the plant's genus name. This chemical reduces the clotting time of blood.

The genus name *Achillea* refers to Achilles, reputed to use this favored plant to keep his armies healthy. The species name *millefolium* literally means "a thousand leaves", descriptive of the feathery foliage. My botanical hero Carl Linnaeus chose scientific plant names for many reasons. For Yarrow, the scientific name he picked was just perfect and must have brought a smile to his face.

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*. Visit <https://www.southernadironackaudubon.org/order-betar-booklet/> to order a booklet. Collin's website is <http://www.wildflowersinyourownbackyard.com>.

Species Spotlight

Fish Crows

By Joyce Miller, SAAS Newsletter Editor

Next time you see a flock of crows, listen. Are they saying a quacky, nasal "nah-anh" or a clear "caw, caw"?

American Crows caw. If you hear "nah-anh" instead, the crows may be Fish Crows (*Corvus ossifragus*). They're just slightly smaller than American Crows, distinguishable only by their calls.

As recently as a decade ago, they were only sporadically reported in our area on eBird. Now, they are common year-round in the Hudson River valley. Previously, they were found mostly in the southeastern United States and along the Atlantic coast. They are found only in the United States.

Our SAAS region is near

the northern limit of their wintering range. They have spread north through the Champlain Valley and now overwinter in Burlington, Vermont. Their winter flocks can number in the hundreds and will congregate with American Crows. Fish Crows now breed as far north as southern Quebec, Canada (<https://ebird.org/species/fiscro>).

While they often are found near wa-

ter and eat fish and other freshwater and marine life, they are equally at home in urban or suburban areas, with a penchant for parking lots. They nest in treetops.

Like their cousins American Crows, they're smart, omnivorous and share similar habitats. Both crow species will steal food from other species and eat nestlings, eggs, fruit, seeds and more. Fish Crows can live up to 14 years. After a drop in population due to West Nile Virus, their numbers are now slightly increasing.

You can remember their call with the world's one Fish Crow joke: if you ask a Fish Crow if they're a American Crow, they'll say "Nuh-uh!"

For more information about Fish Crows and to hear their call, visit All About Birds from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology (<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/>

A Fish Crow puffs up its neck feathers when giving its "nah-anh" call. Photo: Alejandra Lewandowski/Audubon Photography Awards 2017, March 2016.





Renewing your membership will give you a chance at this award-winning photo of a Roseate Spoonbill among Willets in Florida.

Get a chance to win this poster!

If you join as a chapter supporter or renew your membership by June 30, you'll receive three tickets to win this photo, which placed in the 2018 Audubon Photo Award Top 100.

The drawing will be held the first week of July.

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

Amateur photographer Scott Suriano took this photo of a brilliant pink Roseate Spoonbill preening among a flock of drab Willets at the J.N. Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge, Sanibel Island, Florida. As the sun set, Suriano said, he was in the right

place to photograph the spoonbill preening its cotton-candy feathers, which stand in almost cartoonish contrast to the muted tones of the surrounding shorebirds.

This poster-sized photo, on national tour in 2019, is mounted on foam board.

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 membership now at the SAAS Membership page (<https://www.southernadirondackaudubon.org/membership/>).

Leaving a legacy

By Judy Staubo, SAAS Board Member

The *Washington Post* recently printed an article about leaving legacies which fostered some thoughts.

Some legacies are easy to identify:

- Beethoven's symphonies
- Peterson's bird field guides
- Carnegie's libraries

Bird guide books or libraries are beyond the scope of most people, but legacies are possible for everyone and come in all shapes and sizes such as:

- Helping an international student learn English
- Preserving recipes for family and friends
- Coaching Little League

And, of course: sharing with your favorite charities. Simple gifts of annual support allow not-for-profits to plan and grow. Specific gifts enable projects to come to fruition or to enhance and grow efforts like SAAS's Birding Backpack program.

Legacies can be measured in time and the effect on local communities. Legacies can be realized by writing a check, via a contribution from an IRA or a bequest in a will.

We encourage everyone to make a difference this year. Please visit the SAAS Donation page (<https://www.southernadirondackaudubon.org/donate/>).



Photo exhibit in Greenwich

From early May through late June, the Greenwich Free Library in Washington County will display bird photos from the 2022 National Audubon Society Photography Awards.

Almost 2,500 photographers and videographers submitted nearly 10,000 entries to this year's contest.

One of the award-winning photos is pictured on the right. A Western Grebe holds a small fish as its two chicks grab each end of the fish. Peter Shen took this photo at the Calero Reservoir in San Jose, California.



RED-LEGGED HONEYCREEPER

PANAMA

Between Two Continents: Birding in Panama

8 Days | February 1-8, 2025



When it comes to birds, Panama boasts the highest diversity of species in Central America; the country's advantageous location at the convergence of two continents makes it the prime respite for migratory birds from both North and South America. Spend time birding in two distinct regions—the tropical rainforests bordering the Panama Canal, and the midlands and highlands of Chiriquí Province in western Panama—for the chance to see a multitude of species at varying elevations. You'll explore public and private reserves, visit noteworthy birding hotspots, witness the Panama Canal's Miraflores Locks in action, and spend eight days immersed in the country's inviting culture and natural landscapes.

Highlights...

- Hike the world-famous Pipeline Road, where target species include Black Hawk-Eagle, Purple-throated Fruitcrow, Masked Tityra, and hundreds of others.
- Scale the Panama Rainforest Discovery Center's 130-foot tower for the chance to see upper canopy species, including the coveted Blue Cotinga.
- Search for Resplendent Quetzals in Volcán Barú National Park and on the Pipeline Trail in Boquete, near the border with Costa Rica.
- Visit Panama's highest elevation natural wetlands at Las Lagunas, 4,000 feet above sea level, where you may see Masked Duck, Chiriquí Yellowthroat, and Crested Guan.

\$3,450 per person

8-12 participants in double occupancy

Limited single rooms available, \$375 supplement

All inclusive as described in the itinerary, except international airfare, gratuities and personal expenses

More information or to enroll visit
<http://holbrook.travel/saas-pa24>