



The Observer

Newsletter of the Rockland Audubon Society

September-October 2010

www.rocklandaudubon.org

Volume 63, Number 3

RAS Brings Back State Bird By Tom Fuller and Caroline McDonald

Rockland Audubon Society has been involved for months on a labor of love—helping to reestablish the Eastern Bluebird, New York's state bird—and the effort is paying off.

This little beauty, once relatively common, hit upon hard times. From the late 1800s into the mid-1900s, Eastern Bluebird populations declined by as much as 90 percent due to the loss of fields and farms and competition for nesting sites from introduced species such as European Starlings and House Sparrows.

To make matters worse, wood fence posts used in fields were replaced by plastic and metal. This meant that rotting fence posts that once supplied abundant nesting cavities were no longer available. The practice of removing dead trees also eliminated nesting sites for bluebirds. As a final blow, pesticides used in orchards poisoned bluebirds.

In an effort to restore their numbers,

RAS established the Rockland Audubon Bluebird Trail, partnering with Scout troops, Rockland Community College students, RAS members, and the public to build 28 bluebird boxes. RAS members helped put up the boxes in March at eight locations and are monitoring them weekly.



Male Eastern Bluebird on top of RAS nest box

Bluebirds showed interest in some of the boxes almost immediately, as though they knew the boxes were there just for them. Of the 14 pairs of

nest boxes installed, five have been occupied by bluebirds. So far there are six nests as of July; five broods of bluebirds have been fledged—25 birds. One more brood of five is on the way. The birds have already started making their second nesting attempts.

Many of the other boxes have been occupied by Tree Swallows—about 42 chicks have been reported so far. Typically the boxes are installed in pairs, one for bluebirds and one for Tree Swallows, which are compatible.

RAS plans to install more boxes in time for the 2011 nesting season next spring. Stay tuned for updates.

This project would not have been possible without its many supporters (see p. 7 for partners, contributors, and nest box monitors). New nest box sponsors and volunteers are welcome—contact Tom Fuller for more information at otterswift@hotmail.com or call 845-351-2893.

Don't Miss Any Future *Observers*!

We have been saying it for months, but now, it's really going to happen! Rockland Audubon Society is transitioning to the more sustainable newsletter form. Since publishing a paper newsletter uses so many resources and is RAS's biggest expense each year, this is the last copy of *The Observer* that will be distributed on paper. Starting with the next issue, *The Observer* will be delivered to you through e-mail. So, don't miss an issue! If you have not already done so, be sure to sign up for the electronic newsletter list by e-mailing Alan Wells at awells@bestweb.net. Please put [RAS News] in the subject line and your name in the body of the e-mail.

If you do not have e-mail and have not already done so, please call (845) 639-9216 to continue receiving a paper copy.

Inside This Issue: Rockland's Environmental History, Birding at Doodletown, 2010 Birdathon Report, Notes & Sightings, Fall Field Trips, and Fall Programs!

Rockland Audubon Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 404
New City, NY 10956-0404
www.rocklandaudubon.org

Mission

Rockland Audubon Society's mission is to promote environmental conservation and foster an appreciation of birds and nature through education programs and activities.

**Board of Directors*
and Committee Members**

President	Elyse Fuller*
Vice President	Jim Previdi*
Treasurer	Donna Nye*
Secretary	Tom Fuller*
Conservation	Tom Fuller*
	Joanna Galdone*
	Stephanie Garber*
Education	Lorrie Pallant*
	Jim Previdi*
Electronic	Della Wells*
Communications	
Field Trips	Jim Previdi*
Fundraising	Open
Membership	Della Wells*
Publicity	Caroline McDonald*
Programs	Julia Warger*
Webmaster	Alan Wells

Membership

To join, send a \$20 check payable to National Audubon Society to:
Della Wells

9 Dunderberg Road
Tomkins Cove, NY 10986

Allow 4 to 8 weeks for delivery of *Audubon* Magazine and *The Observer*.

The Observer

Editing	Caroline McDonald
Graphics	Elyse Fuller
Copyediting	Alan Wells
	Della Wells

Newsletter Submissions Welcome!

Please send your contributions for *The Observer* to Caroline McDonald at carolinem38a@yahoo.com.

The editor reserves the right to edit any copy for clarity, accuracy and space requirements.

When reprinting, please credit the author and *The Observer* of Rockland Audubon Society.

President's Message

What encouraged you to become a naturalist? Was it one particular moment, or many? For me, it was many, and these moments continually reinforce my interest in nature.

Most of my moments have occurred while out-and-about, birding, hiking, kayaking, or exploring in general, but my most recent happened just a couple of weeks ago. Tom and I were putting in a new garden while a pair of House Wrens busily fed their growing and ever-hungry nestlings in a little box built for us by Tom's niece. Although the wrens scolded us constantly as we dug, planted, and mulched over the course of three days, they continued to go in and out of their nest box, even when we were just a few feet away.

While it's true that House Wrens are rather gregarious birds, I was still impressed that they were so tolerant of us, given that their young could have been at risk. To put it plainly, I felt honored that they built their nest in our yard in the first place—implying that they did not consider us to be a major threat.

Nature is amazingly accessible to all of us here. Consider the opportunities Rockland County has to offer in facili-

tating these personal moments. In fact, many are glimpsed by our board members in this *Observer*. Joanna Galdone describes moments from her childhood and as an adult here in Rockland, reflecting on the county's environmental history. Caroline McDonald shares her adventures during the May 2010 Birdathon, chock-full of these moments, while birding from one end of the county to the other. Tom Fuller reports on Rockland Audubon's bluebird trail project. He conveys the excitement volunteers felt as bluebirds and Tree Swallows fledged from the nest boxes those volunteers helped build and monitor. He also encourages people of all ages to volunteer and experience rich moments of their own. And in his article on Doodletown, Alan Wells describes a magical, yet accessible place full of history, where some of you have already had special moments and where many more are yet to come.

Yes, we are fortunate here in Rockland County. But why not fuel that naturalist flame inside of you? Join us for a field trip or a program this fall.



Yours truly,
Elyse Fuller
August 2010

Welcome, New and Returning Members!

Alesna Delfin, Jr., Rhea Banker, Andrea Braunstein, Mary L. Cull, Nerissa Cusick, Vivian Degroat, Frances Duarte, Carol Eisenberg, Michele Finley, Leon E. Friedrich, Marissa Gomez, Robert Grosser, Beth Grossman, Patricia Ann Hannon, William Hochhausen, Carmen Irizarry, Gerard Jfennelly, Elaine A. Kelly, James Krokus, Ed Larsen, Stephen Leonard, Layne Locker, Regina Lowe, Lauren Lucas, Glenna Marra, John Moyer, Carol Napier, Susanne Nowak, Robert J. Olley, Theresa O'Shea, Colin J. Ossman, Joseph Patrick, Frederic B. Potack, Catherine M. Quinn, Geraldine Rosinski, Arthur & Karen Sauter, Barbara Socor, Dorothy Striplin, Edwin Werfel, Raymond F. Wright

Thank You for the Goodies!

Thank you for donating refreshments for the 2009-2010 programs!

Vicki Beaumont, Karen D'Alessandri, Tom & Elyse Fuller, Joanna Galdone, Stephanie Garber, Veronika Krause, Caroline McDonald, Donna Nye, Lorrie Pallant, Jim Previdi, Julia Warger, Carol Weiss, John Weitmann

Rockland's Gentle Past Gone Forever?

By Joanna Galdone

Standing on the platform of the Congers train station as the mighty steam locomotive delivered my father home from work ranks high in my childhood memories. So, too, does the ride between New City and Congers along the narrow winding road through woods with the stream meandering from one side of the road to the other.

Time, which to a child can seem endless, can have a way of robbing our youth, by turning a peaceful period grounded in certainty and predictability into a lost past. That commuter train that served so many is gone and the peaceful roadway is now the busy causeway across Lake Deforest. While these changes are no doubt documented in Rockland's history, how can we get a sense of the more subtle environmental history of a place?

For me, the recollections of others as well as my own decades-long observations can bring to life how things were compared to how they are now.

My grandmother told me that when they bought their 25 acres in New City in 1923, it looked like "a ghost woods." The chestnut blight had left behind a forest of dead trees, some of which became large beams in the ceiling of the living room where we sat in the house they built on the property. Her first-hand memory of the loss of the most common tree species in the eastern United States made this disaster real for me. I only wish someone had been able to describe the dark clouds of now extinct Passenger Pigeons that had once filled our skies!

I do recall, as a child in New City, being wakened by the frightful sound of owls outside my window. My parents called them, "Barn Owls," although I'm still not sure if they were *Barred* or *Barn* owls. On another memorable night my mother came into my room to comfort me, explaining that the wild chorus we heard from the roof were Whip-poor-wills. More calming, though, was to be lulled into my afternoon naps by the lovely flute-like songs of the Wood Thrush.

Encounters with nature enriched our lives. My mother made willow whistles for my brother and me, and she took us on an annual springtime walk to

look for hepatica and some weeks later to hunt for pink and yellow lady slippers. I remember my mother saying that there used to be even more yellow lady slippers when she was young.

Each year in early summer, we experienced the amazing sight of box and wood turtles gathering en-masse at my grandparents' old clay tennis court to dig holes and lay their eggs. I loved the turtles, and as I looked into their shining red or yellow eyes, their heads would disappear into their shells with a hiss. After we disturbed them, some took longer than others to emerge and then continued on with their solitary walk. When my father, who was a children's book illustrator, needed a turtle to model, he would search for one with success.



Wood Thrush

Red salamanders in the woods were treasures to glimpse, as were a variety of moths and butterflies, some of which ended up in my collection. The local farmer set off loud blanks to scare the large flocks of crows from the newly seeded corn fields, and hot summer days sent us to the streams—which now send their spring-fed waters to Lake Deforest. In the clear water, minnows nibbled our toes, and the neighborhood

boys caught eel, trout, sunfish, and a famous 17-inch sucker.

In those days, when dogs could run free, we once saw two scrawny deer in our backyard, an occurrence not repeated for another three decades. In the meantime, small herds could be seen along the Palisades Parkway at dusk. A chance to view them was an excuse to take a ride on the Parkway, which then had a 40 mph speed limit. At that time, I also recall that the most persistent alien plants were dandelions in the lawns and ragweed along the roadways.

Needless to say, the natural environment I once enjoyed here is forever altered. Today, a quick look at the fragmented woodland areas of our local parklands may leave the viewer with the impression of a static landscape of healthy trees as in past years. A closer evaluation, however, reveals a landscape in transition—the result of historically unprecedented numbers of white-tailed deer and invasive plant species. Deer eat the forest under-story, including tree seedlings and other native plants.

While the trees are nourished and even flourish as invasive worms gobble up the leaf litter, what is emerging is a sterile forest with invasive plants spreading like a green cancer. Along the roadsides and forest edges, garlic mustard, Asian bittersweet, mugwort and Japanese stilt grass have replaced the once pervasive ragweed. Native animal species that are dependent on the native plants are negatively impacted.

Much of the fate of our local open spaces and native species is in our hands now. Tossing wildflower seeds here and there, however, and letting "nature take its course" is an outdated, if not naive, concept. Instead we must actively manage what remains of our invaluable native heritage. Learning about native plants and nurturing them, rather than relegating them as simply weeds, is a good start.

Yet all is not lost. On a recent night I heard the call of a juvenile owl—still not sure which species—and a melodic Wood Thrush now sings in my yard. For me, these are happy moments that give me hope for the future.

Doodletown, Jewel of Rockland

By Alan Wells

Stroll through Doodletown at dawn during early May and you will understand why this hotspot is the crown jewel of Rockland County's birding destinations.

Ascending Gray's Hill you are immediately surrounded by a cacophony of song: a Warbling Vireo to the left, a Yellow Warbler to the right and a Northern Cardinal straight ahead. Further up the hill, the babbling and meowing of a Gray Catbird is heard long before the bird pops into view.

The cascading song of a Louisiana Waterthrush arises from the ravine while the ethereal song of the Veery resonates from some distant hill. As you approach the reservoir, scanning the tree tops yields an assortment of migrants freshly arrived from points south: Scarlet Tanager, Red-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and Indigo Bunting.

And of course, there's the star attraction, the wood warblers: Black-throated Green Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, American Redstart, Black-throated Blue Warbler, and occasionally, even such rarities as the flame-throated Blackburnian Warbler or gorgeous Cape May Warbler. A short walk up Lemmon Road may produce an Eastern Towhee or, on rare occasions, a Kentucky Warbler.

A hidden Rose-breasted Grosbeak is betrayed by a single squeak. Along the shore of the reservoir, Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers hunt for a tasty morsel. At the reservoir, the resident Canada Goose pair will likely be tending their nest—unless you enjoy being beaten unmercifully around your lower extremities, it is best to avoid them. Just past the reservoir, birders delight in the easily found Hooded and Cerulean Warblers. Then, follow Pleasant Valley Road up to the old orchard, where you may stumble across an American Woodcock, hear the gobble of a Wild Turkey, or view a Red-tailed Hawk passing overhead.

Doodletown bustles with activity during the spring, drawing birders from all over the metro New York area and beyond. Yet all this activity belies the fact that Doodletown is now a ghost town. To really appreciate the rich heritage of this by-gone community, visit Doodletown in the fall or winter. You will then have the solitude to reflect on Doodletown's bittersweet history.

Doodletown was first settled in the early 1790's. While the origin of the name is not known for certain, one favorite theory is that the name is derived from the Dutch for "Dead Dell." The Tomkins, June, Weiant, and Herbert families were among the first residents. During the Revolutionary war,



Black-throated Green Warbler

General Anthony Wayne used Doodletown Road to move troops for his successful attack on Stony Point. The road was also used as an important military route over the Dunderberg to Forts Clinton, Montgomery and West Point. After the war, a number of the original residents moved on. The remaining population farmed, mined, and supported growing local businesses such as brick making and ice harvesting. By 1886, F.B. Green's a "*History of Rockland County*" referred to Doodletown as "...a vast tract of inhospitable mountain and rock" and indicated that the area was sparsely settled by woodsmen engaged in supplying lumber to the landing at Iona Island.

Doodletown grew slowly and by the 1920s supported a school, a church, two cemeteries, several small businesses and about 70 homes. At that

time, Bear Mountain State Park began to expand and was buying up Doodletown properties. By the 1950s, most of the residents had sold out and moved away; homes of those who refused to sell were obtained through eminent domain. The last remaining residents left Doodletown by April of 1965. The Park demolished the remnants of the remaining houses, closed the roads, and allowed the forest to reclaim the site. A dam on Timp Brook, creating the reservoir, was completed in 1975. Today, only a few of the old walls and foundations serve as tangible reminders of the past. A more subtle legacy appears each spring when the Forsythia, Wisteria, daffodils, lilacs, and honeysuckle come into bloom. These garden favorites continue to bloom long after their original caretakers have gone.

Doodletown is in the northern apex of the Rockland County "triangle." From the north, follow Route 9W south while from the south, follow 9W north. About one mile south of the Bear Mountain Bridge you will find several small parking areas near two white concrete abutments indicating the bridge over Doodletown Brook. Park along the road.

On the west side of Route 9W take the trail to the right of the Brook—it is marked by a Park sign and map. Proceed up the hill (Gray's Hill) to old Doodletown Road. There are several old roads, trails, and unmarked paths throughout the town site. A trail map—available for free on the Rockland Audubon Society website, www.rocklandaudubon.org, will help you navigate.

Or for a deeper understanding of Doodletown's rich history, take along a copy of Elizabeth "Perk" Stalter's 1996 book *Doodletown - Hiking Through History in a Vanished Hamlet on the Hudson*. Perk's book is available at the PIPC bookstore on the Palisades Interstate Parkway.

2010 Birdathon A Winner On Many Levels

By Caroline McDonald

Cerulean Warbler. That's about all you need to say in some circles to get a lively conversation going.

In my nearly two years as a birder with Rockland Audubon Society, I have read about, heard about and hoped to observe this little bird that people love to discuss—and travel here from around the state to see.

And now, early morning on Day Two of the Birdathon, there it is. It's a faraway speck, flitting from branch to branch, treetop to treetop. Now it's still—hidden behind a clump of maple leaves, impossible to see. Pin this little creature down with a pair of binoculars? Not going to happen, I'm finding out.

Yes, I've finally seen one, I say, vowing inwardly to check my field guide again at home to remind myself what it looks like. And there it is again! Once more I spot the bird, bring up my binoculars and focus, only to find a lonely cluster of leaves.

I remind myself of all the birds I've seen since yesterday—probably 60 different types of birds and the day is young. It's a great experience. Each bird is unique and each is like a prize discovery on a treasure hunt.

An important part of the success of our team—which was dubbed the “gaggle” by team member Tom Fuller—is the expertise and years of knowledge the members together bring into it. All-in-all, it's a formidable group.

Between the members is familiarity with every corner of the county and what birds can generally be

found where and at what time of the year. Most of all, the sense of discovery—and the fun—is ever present, even as exhaustion sets in. On Day One, we finally stop looking for owls, at 10:00 p.m. because we have to. Food and sleep, after all, are necessities and tomorrow will start early. On Day Two we keep looking until the last second, until our 24-hour clock runs out.

But there in the middle of that 24-hour period I become aware of one thing: I am standing in the middle of a fragrant, lush forest and there are sounds—buzzes, chirps, trills and warbles—flying through space around me in every direction.

I am surrounded, I realize, by languages. Important messages being sent about nesting materials, worms, crickets, berries, territories, eggs that need to be kept warm and danger—such as strangers tramping through the woods below. Each sound is unique, each bird telling a story.

Every type of bird spotted is also a story. Here is the Tree Swallow guarding its nesting box from another bird perched nearby. Here is the lone Great Blue Heron, standing motionless at the edge of a pond, at one with its prey. The hapless fish, swimming below, is unaware of the heron's presence. Here is the bright orange Baltimore Oriole singing loudly at the tip-top of a tree where it can easily be seen. And here is the one Rock Pigeon we've seen all day conveniently landing right in front of us in a parking lot.

But here in this forest, I want to

stand and listen and know what the birds are saying and why. Documenting their presence is my way—our way—of honoring these nomads, many of which travel thousands of miles each year returning to build their nests in a tree cavity, a nest box, or even on the ground. They face daily obstacles to keep their species alive.

We did meet our goal of more than 100 different types of birds—101 were documented in the 24-hour span. The frustrating part was that some of the birds we assumed we would see right away were never spotted. We didn't see a flicker, a raven, or a black-and-white warbler, for example. There were a few members of the group who lamented that we didn't find more, but my opinion is that we did just fine. You can't locate what isn't there, and if it was there, we saw it.

And what about that Cerulean Warbler? Well, on the final leg of our hike, back in that same spot, what did we see but another Cerulean. This time, though, the little fellow obligingly perched on a bare limb and stayed there long enough for me to get a good look.

That and the celebratory dinner made for a very successful 24 hours in my book. It's one that I'll remember for a long time—at least until Birdathon day next year.

More information about the Birdathon and a list of species observed can be found at www.rocklandaudubon.org.

Thank You to Our 2010 Birdathon Donors!

Bergen County Camera, Joan Brooks, Gene Brown, Belinda Cash, Colour Room, Inc., Karen D'Alessandri, Glenys Foster Roberts, Anne French, Elyse & Tom Fuller, Julian Harvey, Karen Houghton Interiors, Inc., Peter Johnson, Bonnie Koop, Donna Nye, Sandy Palius, Stan & Lorrie Pallant, Jean Pardo, Jim Previdi, Van Houten Gardens, Inc., Julia Warger, John Weitmann, Alan & Della Wells, Wild Birds Unlimited

Special Lectures: “Birding by Ear”

with Lorrie Pallant, RAS Education Chair



Thursday, Sept. 23, 2010, 7 p.m.,
New City Library

Thursday, Oct. 7, 2010, 7 p.m.,
Finkelstein Library

Notes and Sightings

Compiled by Carol Weiss

March, April and May, 2010

Spring! For birders, 'tis the season most like Christmas. While we bundle up and faithfully watch birds in the winter months, hoping for a rarity or two, we are really waiting for Spring when the migrants begin to arrive. At first, only one or two each day, but by May, any outing may reveal a number of new arrivals from the south. We relish each first-of-the-season look and relearn the songs unique to each species. And for some of us, there may be a "new bird" in the mix. Many Rockland birders sent in detailed observations for this report—thank you so much!

March 2: A lone Fox Sparrow seen at Piermont Pier. Carol Weiss, Tom Rowe, Dan Albantides

March 5: Spotted and photographed a young Iceland Gull near the end of Piermont Pier. Rosemarie Widmer

March 7: Two Red-shouldered Hawks, soaring high and heading north were seen by many observers from Ferry Road, Piermont Pier. RAS field trip

March 7: Three woodcocks heard calling at Rockland Lake at dusk, but not seen. Carol Weiss

March 15: Drew Ciganek saw a Golden Eagle and a Tree Swallow, both at Piermont Pier.

March 16: Kakiat Park at dusk, five to seven American Woodcock "preening" and displaying. John Lampkin, Ken McNichol, Marsha Meyer, Jessie Traband, Carol Weiss

March 19: Chris Healy reported a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak at his feeder in Pearl River and a male Baltimore Oriole in his backyard—in a flock of red-wings and grackles!

March 20: Around 5 p.m. I inadvertently flushed a woodcock, resting on brush on my property near a footpath. It took off in a great flutter into a more wooded area. John Deans

March 21: Grandpa and I saw three phoebes at Piermont Pier on Sunday. We also took a trip to the Shawangunk Grasslands and saw a Short-eared Owl, harriers, and many woodcocks. Three or four times, we have also seen a Barred Owl in Bluefields. Chris Healy

March 25: Brown Creeper in my backyard. Veronika Krause

March 27: Nyack Beach State Park: Two Peregrine Falcons sitting midway up the cliff above the one-half mile mark on the walking trail—both near sites where nests have been located in other years. Carol Weiss

April 3: Kakiat Park: Pine Warbler in pine grove and a Louisiana Waterthrush at the stream where the Kakiat Trail (White Bar) crosses the gas line. Carol Weiss

April 4: Palm Warbler midway out Piermont Pier; also American Kestrel in the air seen well by most. RAS field trip

April 7: Five Tom turkeys displaying and strutting their stuff before five uninterested hens. Greenbush Road, between Spruce and Erie Streets, Blauvelt, 6:45 a.m. Veronika Krause

April 12: Shortly after 8 a.m., I flushed a single snipe from the ball field pond near Piermont Pier. Nearby was a Savannah Sparrow, possibly two. Carol Weiss

April 13: Piermont Pier at high tide, 12:30 p.m., 40 Bonaparte's Gulls sighted. All but a few were in breeding plumage; a few were in high breeding plumage and showed a lovely pink wash to their breasts. Rosemarie Widmer

April 14: Piermont Pier ball field pond just after 1 p.m., two snipe flushed, one after the other, from the *Phragmites* at the west edge of the "beach." Linda Pistolessi

April 18: Grandpa and I saw a Mallard X black duck hybrid, Worm-eating and Pine Warblers, and a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. I also found a Barred Owl feather. Chris Healy

May 1: This morning in Palisades I saw and heard 3 Red-headed Woodpeckers. Chris Healy (and took photos.)

May 2: I saw at least one of the Red-headed Woodpeckers again. Also at Iona Island, two Blue-gray Gnatcatchers—and their nest! Two Pileated Woodpeckers, too. Chris Healy. Note: The Red-headed Woodpeckers were seen in Tallman Mt. State Park through May.

May 3: About 11 a.m., saw 15 Brant swimming on the south side of Piermont Pier; four Spotted Sandpipers on the north side; a White-crowned Sparrow hid in the playground; and a Blackpoll Warbler was singing in the willow behind the Goswick Pavilion. Carol Weiss

May 3: In and around the Piermont Pier ball field, about 5 p.m., a Solitary Sandpiper, a Cuckoo (species unidentified), Chestnut-sided and Yellow Warblers, a flock of Savannah Sparrows, an American Redstart, a Common Yellowthroat, three Snowy Egrets and a Warbling Vireo. The sight of the day was a Willet on the rocks off the north side of the road. Chris Healy

May 4: My first Eastern Kingbirds of the season at Rockland Lake, one on the west side and one near the south swimming pool. Veronika Krause

May 10: Spotted a male Common Yellowthroat in my W. Nyack backyard and a female Ruby-throated hummingbird at the feeder. Beverly Simone

May 13: Nighthawks at 2 p.m. at the Celery Farm; Allendale, N.J. Bob Burton

May 17: Two lifers in one day: A Canada Warbler and a Chestnut-sided Warbler, which followed our first Brown Thrasher last week. Also saw a Wood Thrush; and robins and Baltimore Orioles are nesting in the yard, second year in a row. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and towhees are around, too. Belinda Cash

May 20: Suffern: Something I had never seen before—a pair of flycatchers (possibly Acadian or Yellowbellied) picking over long strips of a black snake's shedded skin. Afterward, they flew away and left the skins draped over a branch. Peggy Bruner

May 24: Piermont Pier, 12 Brant in the water to the south and three gorgeous Black-bellied Plovers on the north side rocks. Gene Brown

Please continue to send in your bird sightings to Carol at cweiss1124@optonline.net or call her at 845-358-3659.

2010 RAS Fall Field Trips

Check www.rocklandaudubon.org for updates!

Note: Please call the trip leader 24-hours in advance if you plan to meet at the field trip site, rather than the designated meeting place.

Sept. 5 (Sun.): First Sunday Walk at Kakiat Park

Meet Carol Weiss at 8 a.m. at the parking lot off Rt. 202 opposite Viola School. Over by 10 a.m. 845-358-3659

Sept. 12 (Sun.): Hudson River Ramble At Stony Point Battlefield

Co-sponsored by RAS and Stony Point Battlefield State Historic Site. Meet Alan and Della Wells at 8 a.m. in the main parking lot at the end of Battlefield Rd.—accessed from Park Rd. off Rt. 9W in Stony Point. Take an early fall stroll through this historic site on the Hudson River. 845-942-5751

Sept. 12 (Sun.): Stream Invertebrates of Sparkill Creek in Blauvelt

This portion of the Sparkill Creek, in Tackamack Park off Clauseland Mountain Rd. contains a diversity of stream invertebrates. Join Martin (Butch) Rosenfeld as he captures and IDs these animals using nets and field microscope. Park and meet in Tackamack parking lot. Co-sponsored by Greenbrook Nature Association. 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Sept. 17 (Fri.): Weekday Walk at Celery Farm

Meet Elyse Fuller at 8 a.m. at the Celery

Farm parking lot on Franklin Tpk., Allendale, N.J. Over by 10 a.m. 845-351-2893

Sept. 18 (Sat.): Hook Mt. Hawk Watch

Meet Jim Previdi at 9 a.m. by the flagpole at the Executive Golf Course, Rockland Lake State Park S. Walk to the top of Hook Mt. to view migrating hawks. Bring hat, binoculars, water. Bring food if you wish to stay all day. 845-942-8448

Sept. 25 (Sat.): Celery Farm, Allendale, N.J.

Meet Jim Previdi at 9 a.m. at the Commuter Parking Lot, Rt. 303 N., West Nyack for carpooling. Fall migrating waterfowl. Good for beginners. Footpath may be wet. Return 12-1 p.m. 845-942-8448

Oct. 1 (Fri.): Weekday Walk at Doodletown

Meet Elyse Fuller at 8 a.m. at the pull-off on Rt. 9W, just north of the Iona Island causeway, south of Bear Mt. Some uphill walking. Over by 10 a.m. 845-351-2893

Oct. 3 (Sun.): First Sunday Walk at Kakiat Park

Meet Veronika Krause at 8 a.m. at the parking lot off Rt. 202 opposite Viola School. Over by 10 a.m. 845-359-9294

Oct. 17 (Sun.): Trees of Tallman State Park

Meet Matt Beckerle at 10 a.m. at the south entrance parking lot on Rt. 9W, about one mile south of the main entrance to Tallman State Park, for a nature stroll with emphasis on fall tree ID. 845-735-5411 or 845-942-8448

Oct. 24 (Sun.): Croton Point Park

Meet Carol Weiss at 8 a.m. at the Commuter Parking Lot, Rt. 303 N., West Nyack, for carpooling or at 8:45 a.m. at the small office parking area at Croton Point. Look for grassland birds—sparrows, hawks and more—on the old landfill. Over around noon.

Oct. 31 (Sun.): Piermont Pier for Beginners

Meet Della and Alan Wells at 8 a.m., at the ball field parking lot at the Piermont Pier entrance. Practice bird ID and binocular use on ducks and other birds. 845-942-5751

Nov. 7 (Sun.): First Sunday Walk at Kakiat Park

Meet Carol Weiss at 8 a.m. at the parking lot off Rt. 202 opposite Viola School. Over by 10 a.m. 845-358-3659

Nov. 13-14 (Sat and Sun): Fall Migration at Brigantine and Cape May

All-day trip (Sat.) to Brigantine Unit of Edwin B. Forsythe NWR, N.J. Meet Jim Previdi at 6:30 a.m. at the Commuter Parking Lot, Rt. 303 N., West Nyack. If desired, continue to Cape May for an overnight stay and bird on Sunday with Alan and Della Wells. 845-942-8448 or 845-942-5751

Dec. 5 (Sun.): First Sunday Walk at Kakiat Park

Meet Veronika Krause at 8 a.m. at the parking lot off Rt. 202 opposite Viola School. Over by 10 a.m. 845-359-9294

Thank you to all who have made the RAS Nest Box Project possible!

Partners and Contributors

Audubon New York, Beckerle Lumber & Supply Company, Boy Scout Troop 61, Brownie Troop 40245, Marydell Faith & Life Center, Sandy Morrissey of Bronx-River Sound Shore Audubon Society, Palisades Interstate Park Commission, Ramapo Equestrian Center, Rockland County Division of Environmental Resources, Rockland Community College Environmental Club and General Ecology Class, Rockland Audubon Members, John Rogers of NYS Bluebird Society, Harry Schmeider of the Bluebird Society of PA, Stony Point Battlefield State Historic Site, Tappan Cemetery, Alan Wells Photography, Together Green

2010 Nest Box Monitors



Debbie Bell
Karen D'Alessandri
Elyse & Tom Fuller
Peter Johnson
Frank Kemmer
Caroline McDonald
Donna Nye
Julia Warger
Alan & Della Wells

Upcoming Rockland Audubon Society Programs

New Program Location: The Historical Society of Rockland County

RAS programs are held at the Historical Society of Rockland County, 20 Zukor Road, New City, NY 10956. Doors open at 7 p.m. for refreshments. Program starts at 7:30. Please see www.rocklandaudubon.org for directions.

September 3, 2010 Ron Breeland will provide an update on the plight of the American Honeybee, a species threatened by pesticides, other toxins, and loss of habitat. A long-time beekeeper, Ron will discuss bees, organic gardening, and his own unique beehive design.

October 1, 2010 Join wildlife handler, explorer, and author Rusty Johnson to learn about Earth's wild creatures and wild cultures. This program will feature live birds of prey and other animals which act as ambassadors for their wild cousins. This is a great program for the whole family!

November 5, 2010 Peter Capainolo from the American Museum of Natural History will investigate mysteries of the avian world as answered in his new book *How Fast Can a Falcon Fly? Fascinating Answers to Questions about Birds of Prey* co-authored by Carol Butler. Copies of his book will be available for purchase and signing at the program.
