



Spring 2015

WINGBEATS

In Memoriam

Founder of the Audubon Society of the Capital Region Passes

It is with deep regret that we note the passing of Eric Leighton on January 12. Upon moving to Delmar in 1964, Eric and his charming wife Bernice became actively involved in local environmental affairs. In 1969 Eric and Bernice helped found what was then called the Albany County Audubon Society, now the Audubon Society of the Capital Region. It was not uncommon for Eric and Bernice to host Audubon board meetings at their house, which soon became an ad hoc clearinghouse for all manner of environmental information. At the time, the National Audubon Society had a Nature Centers Planning Division which actively encouraged the development of community-based nature centers throughout the US. Upon hearing of the imminent closure of the Delmar Experimental Game Farm, Eric helped organize and incorporate Five Rivers Limited in the fall of 1971, which led the charge to have the soon-to-be-abandoned site repurposed as the Five Rivers Environmental Education Center in June 1972. A man of many interests and talents, Eric enjoyed an illustrious professional career with the Public Service Commission and cultivated many outside interests, but, to many, his work in environmental education and advocacy will be his most enduring legacy.

Bethlehem High Grad, now Dartmouth Freshman Finds Her Calling in the Forests of Ecuador

By Alisa E. White

I grew up running through the forests in Upstate New York – weaving quickly from pine tree to pine tree, climbing maples along the way, repeating chickadee and mourning dove calls, searching for deer skulls, and (of course) avoiding poison ivy and checking ever so often for deer ticks. The forest, the jungle, of Ecuador is in many ways completely foreign terrain. My hiking boots are brought to shame by the mud pits on the trails here; the foliage is lush and impassable without a machete; and the trees, plants, fruits, and animals were utterly unrecognizable at first. (It took me days to even start to recognize a single bird call.)



Pionus Parrot in Archidona, Ecuador - Photo: Alisa E. White

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There is one thing very similar, though, between the forests of Upstate New York and the jungle of Amazonia in the Napo Region of Ecuador: they need to be cared for and protected. This effort ultimately comes down to making effective, equitable forest management plans to ensure the livelihoods of both forests and the people who live in them. I first learned about forest management when I had the incredible opportunity to go with the Audubon Society of the Capital Region to Forestry Awareness Day 2014 at the New York State Capitol. I had always been very interested in environmental protection, habitat preservation and renewable energy, but I was quite a newbie to forest management at the time.

(Continued on page 4)

SPRING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS!

Monday April 4th, 7pm

Bird and Wildlife Management at Albany International Airport by USDA—APHIS Wildlife Management Services

Location: William K. Sanford Library
325 Albany Shaker Road, Loudonville, NY

What does the USDA Wildlife Services do at the airport to manage sensitive bird species other wildlife, such as foxes, coyotes, and other animals that fly and wander onto the airport property? Your questions will be answered in this fascinating program by Ken Pruesser, USDA—APHIS

Saturday April 19th & Sunday 20th

Volunteer Conservation Weekend at
Schodack Island State Park!

*Day Work or Overnight Camping!
See Page 7 for more Info!*

*2nd Annual
Town of Clifton Park
Celebration of Open Space Day!*

Saturday, May 16, 2015

**Nature Walks and Outdoor Events all
over Clifton Park!**

**Visit our ASCR Info table from 10am
to 3pm at Historic Grooms Tavern on
Grooms Road in Rexford, NY.**

**10am - Join our ASCR Bird & Nature
Walk Leaders for a Walk in the Woods
at Vischer Ferry Nature Preserve.
Meet at Whipple Bridge!**

**Noon @ Grooms Tavern - Beginners
Birding Workshop for Kids & Adults!**

**Remember! ALL of our
Bird Walks & Programs are
FREE Open to the Public!**

"Migration Celebration!"

**Saturday May 2, 2015
10am - 3pm**

Albany Pine Bush Discovery Center
195 New Karner Road, Albany, NY 12203

**Celebrate the upcoming International Migratory Bird
Day with a FULL day of activities at our 4th annual
Bird Festival! Co-sponsor: APB Discovery Center**

- 8:00 am - Early Morning Birdwalk in the Pine
Bush - FREE, but **Registration is Required!**
Call (518)456-0655 to reserve your spot.

- 7:30am - 10am - Bird Banding Station of song-
birds caught in mist nets. and release.

- 10:00 Doors Open! **Kids Migration Challenge**

- 11am - Presentation:
"Icon of Extinction: The Passenger Pigeon"
with Dr. Jeremy Kirchman, Curator of Birds at the
NYS Museum

- 1:30pm - **Live Birds of Prey!** with Trish Marki of
"Silent Wings" Wildlife Institute of Eastern NY!

- Additionally, there will be Kids Art Activities! Dis-
plays on Bird Conservation and More!

**Thacher State Park's 10th Anniversary
Native Plant Sale**

"Bring Your Landscape to Life"

**Saturday May 30th & Sunday May 31st
10am to 3pm**

Emma Treadwell Thacher Nature Center,
87 Nature Center Way, Voorheesville, NY 12186

There will be native plants for pollinators and birds,
and plants that shelter wildlife. Knowledgeable staff
will be on hand to answer questions and to help choose
the best native plants for your landscape. Stop by
our ASCR table for Bird-friendly Garden Info!

ASCR'S EXPANDED SPRING BIRD WALK SCHEDULE!

Saturday April 11th - 8:00 AM

Second Saturdays at Schodack Island S.P.

South of Albany on Route 9J just outside of Castleton-On-Hudson, NY

Join Mike King and Eric Latini as they lead you onto the trails of Schodack Island State Park, known for Bald Eagles & Spring Migrants. Please come prepared to wear weather proof footwear as some of the trails might be damp and muddy with this years snow melt!

Pre-Migration Celebration Bird Walk !

Saturday May 2nd, 2015

Meet at: Albany Pine Bush Discovery Center
195 New Karner Road, Albany, NY 12203

Time: 7:30 am - Morning Birdwalk in the Pine Bush is FREE, but Registration is Required!
Call (518)456-0655 to reserve your spot.

Walk will include witnessing Bird Mist Netting & Bird Banding at the outdoor data collection table!

Avian Haunts!

Saturday April 25th - 8:00AM

Washington Park, Albany NY

Meet at: Corner of Englewood Place and State Street, Albany, NY

This Special 'Birding & History Walk' of Washington Park and the surrounding neighborhoods will feature Tristan Lowery, helping our group track down urban migrating and resident 'Avians' of Albany's premiere park, while Dr. John Pipkin of the Washington Park Conservancy (a birder himself) will elegantly fill in some intriguing history surrounding Washington Park 'Haunts.'

Tri-Sponsored by Washington Park Conservancy, Historic Albany Foundation and ASCR

Saturday May 9th, 8:00 AM
Second Saturdays at Schodack Island S.P.

South of Albany on Route 9J just outside of Castleton-On-Hudson, NY

Join Mike King as he leads you onto the trails of Schodack Island State Park, known for breeding Cerulean Warblers, which are annual breeders here at the Park as well as any other colorful migrants in their breeding plumage and signs of Bald Eagles!

Saturday June 13th

(Meeting Place and Time: TBA in our next newsletter & on website.)

BIRDING BY EAR

Celebrating the NEW

Rensselaer Plateau Community Forest!

Newly protected forest in the heart of the *Rensselaer Forest Tract Important Bird Area* (IBA)! Join Mary Batchellor, the long-time surveyor of this IBA to train our ears listening for resident forest birds.

Co-sponsoring with the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance

Bird Walk Events over Memorial Day Weekend close by in Schoharie County!

Howes Cave, NY

Saturday May 23rd - Iroquois Indian Museum

~ Bird Walk at 9am ~

~ Live Birds of Prey! at 10:30am ~

Enjoy a beautiful, short drive down I-88 for an expert led **Bird Walk** on the Museum Trails & then see **Live Birds of Prey!** You also get **HALF OFF** the Admission Price to the Museum!

Middleburgh, NY

Sunday May 24th - Birds n' Brews!

Meet @ Green Wolf Brewing Co. - 9am

Join ASCR bird walk leader Eric Latini as we bird the flat portion of The Long Path. Afterwards, buy your lunch in Middleburgh or brown bag your own and eat at the Green Wolf Tasting Room, which will open early @ 11am, just for our group!

Searching for NYS Golden Eagles

Part 1

by Angelika Beckmann

This winter, ASCR participated in its inaugural year in the Appalachian Eagle Project in partnership with Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society and West Virginia University; the purpose of the Appalachian Eagle Project is to determine if over wintering golden eagles are present at baited camera sites located throughout various states on the east coast.

ASCR's participation in this project entailed setting up a motion detecting camera December 27, 2014 at a location in Albany County and baiting the 'camera site' with deer carcasses in an area where Golden Eagles have been observed. A second site was set up in northern Columbia County January 10, 2015 where Golden Eagles were recently observed and have a history of flying through the area. All of the carcasses were collected by ASCR's Angelika Beckmann via a license to collect permit from New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The sites were monitored on a regular basis for feeding activity and both batteries and SD cards were



changed and downloaded as needed. In addition, the carcasses were also replenished at each site as needed.



ASCR Board Members Angelika Beckmann and Mike Devoe

Although no golden eagles were observed feeding at either feeding station as of February 23, 2015, we have had red tail hawks, ravens, coyotes, red fox, bald eagles, and a bobcat visiting our 2 sites. Here are some great shots of what did stop in for a frozen deer buffet!

February 28, 2015 is the cut off date for over wintering golden eagles, which means that any photos captured of golden eagles after this date are consider migrants. ASCR is continuing both sites through the Spring and the Part 2 of this article will continue in the next newsletter. Stay tuned and think Golden!!!



(Continued from page 1)

I was amazed to learn how laws, incentives and tax code can affect what landowners do to protect their forest. Furthermore, I not only learned about everything from biomass energy to forest management, but also met inspired and passionate foresters, lobbyists, policy makers and non-profit activists. This experience with Audubon is what first inspired me to look into forest management and forest policy and, ultimately, intern with Runa Foundation in the Napo Region of Ecuador this winter.



Hiking a waterfall in the Amazon with fellow RUNA interns.


Runa Foundation is the non-profit arm of RUNA LLC, a company that sells the delicious guayusa tea native to the forests of the Ecuadorian Amazon back in the United States, Canada and Europe. Runa Foundation's mission is to ensure the Fair Trade certification of all RUNA products and create new value for tropical forests that benefit local people and forest ecosystems. As an agricultural economics intern with Runa, I have been working on integrated forest management projects in the Ecuadorian Amazon. These management plans integrate conservation, timber production, agricultural output and subsistence production in forests that support a host of wildlife and the indigenous, Kichwa people native to the area. My work specifically has been to analyze agroforestry data and gather income and spending data from local communities. I am currently working with women from five different local families to record household finances every week and show them how to use the household budgeting tool. Hopefully, this tool will help women to feel like they have more knowledge of and control over how the household income is spent.

More than anything, this experience has shown me first-hand how forest, human and animal livelihoods

are deeply intertwined. Without a forest management plan and monetary incentives in timber-rich regions, native forests will continue to be over-forested. The birds that make their habitats in these trees would suffer as well as the human inhabitants of the area, who would struggle in the long run as timber trees become more and more scarce. I have become so passionate about my work here, not only because of the natural beauty of the jungle, but also because of the incredible variety of birds here in Ecuador. The Yellow-rumped Cacique with its small hanging nest is a common roadside sighting in rural areas and I have even seen a Spotted Sandpiper, one of the birds that migrate from the States to Ecuador for the winter! In addition to appreciating the natural beauty, I have loved working with passionate, dedicated local people who are keen to invest in their forests and work to improve their livelihoods.

Ecuador is a beautiful, inspiring place. The jungle of the Napo Region draws you in and holds you tight



with captivating adventures. I hope to return here or elsewhere in Latin America in the future to continue to work on sustainable forest management, social entrepreneurship or renewable energy projects. For now, I'll savor my last few weeks of waterfalls, wildlife and adventure in Ecuador before heading back to the States! 

Please join us in Applauding our New
Inaugural Chapter Supporters who
just joined us!

Will Aubry
Jeff and Nancy Gregg
Nancy Kern
Kathryn Sikule
Mary Ellen Frieberg

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Thank You In - Memory - Of Donors

In acknowledgement of a donation by  
**Craig Thompson...**

**In Memory of Eric Leighton**

## Wanna Get Away?



### CABIN GETAWAY

all yours for one week

AUDUBON FUNDRAISER

Any week: Spring, Summer or Fall 2015

Winner will be selected on Sunday April 26

John J. Audubon's Birthday!

Please Support our **ASCR Spring  
Fundraiser** to fund our ongoing  
Conservation & Education Efforts.

To purchase a raffle ticket - Go to this link:

[http://www.capitalregionaudubon.org/  
cabin-getaway.php](http://www.capitalregionaudubon.org/cabin-getaway.php)

To send in a check for a  
raffle ticket (or two!), postmarked by April 20th,  
address the envelope to: **ASCR, Cabin Getaway,  
PO Box 14135, Albany NY, 12212 - 4135**

Become an Inaugural Capital Region  
Audubon Chapter Supporter!

Do You want to see your donation stay local?

You'll be supporting our Free Birding Events and  
Help with our operating expenses!

Please make checks payable to:

Audubon Society of the Capital Region  
P.O. Box 14135, Albany, NY 12212-4135

Basic Chapter Membership - Individual or Family - 1 Year \$20.00

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: (To Receive Our Seasonal Newsletter "Wingbeats"):

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

\*I would like to make an additional Donation of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

We're now on Twitter!

An obvious place for an Audubon  
Chapter to be, don't cha think?

"Follow" us!

@CapRegAudubon

...and watch for our "Tweets!"



Also...





## ASCR Volunteer Days at Schodack Island State Park! Saturday April 18th and Sunday April 19th! - **Earth Day Weekend!** **We Need YOU to Help Save Our Native Forests!**

JOIN ASCR as we cut an **invasive plant species**, Oriental Bittersweet vines that are 3 inches and more in diameter to save the island forests and the roosting trees of Bald Eagles and the '[Climate Threatened](#)' [Cerulean Warbler](#).  
**Volunteer one day or bring your camping gear and camp overnight to both work days!**

**To Sign-up for one or both days, Email: [president@capitalregionaudubon.org](mailto:president@capitalregionaudubon.org)**

We're continuing our work we started at our first **Invasive Species Volunteer Work Day** back on September 29th, 2012, by adding some experimental work. We'll be comparing different treatment methods, in particular **cutting** stems versus **girdling** them, as well as applying a more systematic approach to control areas. Bring hand saws, loppers, garden gloves, & weatherproof boots! **Lunches will be Provided!**

### Bird of the Month: American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) by Fred Bockis

The Robin is a common sight in our yards, pulling out earthworms, starting in early spring. Their presence and cheery song historically, are our cue that spring is actually here, or very close. They are found throughout North America and although their scientific name alludes to Robins 'migrating' south in winter to Florida, central Mexico and the Pacific coast, a substantial population remains through the winter, feeding on fruits and berries. They also eat grubs and caterpillars when the weather is warmer and those can be found.

Robin's rusty red breast and sides (males especially) is easily recognized. The female has a white belly and a black tip on its long, narrow, yellow bill. Some robins may exhibit white, splotchy coloration called 'leucism.' Robins make a new nest every year, & the female lays three to five distinctive blue eggs. The beautiful egg color has a paint named after it, as well as a Crayon. A robin may have one to three broods in a season.

Robins are the largest North American thrushes, and make a good reference point for comparing the size and shape of other birds. You may be surprised that a close relative is the Eastern Bluebird, which is more compact and with a rounder head, is also a 'thrush-like' bird, as termed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Robins are 10-11 inches long and weigh less than 3 oz. Their wingspan is 12 to 16 inches. Robins sing when they arrive on their breeding territories and their predators are hawks, cats, and large snakes.  
A couple interesting facts: Not only are they the state bird of Connecticut, Michigan and Wisconsin, but in Canada, the Robin last appeared on the 1986 \$2.00 Canadian note, before it became a \$2.00 "Toonie" coin in 1996.

#### Old English Poem:

*Little Robin Redbreast  
Came to visit me;  
This is what he whistled,  
Thank you for my tea.*

*Little Robin Redbreast  
Sat upon a rail;  
Niddle noble went his head,  
Widdle waggle went his tail*



*Leucistic American Robin*



## Board Member Spotlight!

### **Jeremy Taylor, Incoming Recording Secretary**

Jeremy Taylor is an environmental educator with NYSDEC, where he edits *Conservationist for Kids* magazine and assists with *Conservationist* magazine. He holds a B.S. in environmental biology from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and an MBA in Sustainable Business from Marylhurst University. Jeremy has previously worked for PetSmart, Audubon International, the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, Disney's Animal Kingdom, and the San Antonio Zoo. A native of Greene County, where he grew up on a farm that has been in the family for over 100 years, Jeremy has been interested in birds and birding since being introduced to the hobby by his maternal grandfather as a child.

### OFFICERS

|                               |                   |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Presidential Committee Chair: | John Loz          |
| Vice- President:              | Angelika Beckmann |
| Correspondence Secretary:     | Fred Bockis       |
| Treasurer:                    | René Facchetti    |
| Recording Secretary:          | Jeremy Taylor     |

### DIRECTORS

Eric Latini  
Craig Thompson  
Mike Devoe

### COMMITTEES

|                                   |                               |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Conservation: Chair:              | Eric Latini                   |
| Conservation Volunteers:          | Angelika Beckmann             |
| Education Coordinator:            | Open Position!                |
| Education Volunteer:              | Craig Thompson                |
| Programs Coordinator:             | Open Position!                |
| Programs Volunteer:               | John Loz                      |
| Hospitality Committee Volunteers: | Open Positions!               |
| Field Trips:                      | John Loz                      |
| Field Trip Volunteers:            | Craig Thompson<br>Eric Latini |
| Fundraising Chair:                | John Loz                      |
| Membership Chair:                 | Fred Bockis                   |
| Editor of Wingbeats Newsletter:   | John Loz                      |
| Co-Editor of Wingbeats            | Rene Facchetti                |
| Webmaster:                        | René Facchetti                |
| ASCR Board Member Emeritus:       | Jerry Brown                   |

**Audubon Society  
of the Capital Region**  
P.O. Box 14135  
Albany, NY 12212-4135  
[www.capitalregionaudubon.org](http://www.capitalregionaudubon.org)

## **Make your Backyard Bird-friendly!**

In urban and suburban areas, our backyards can serve as important havens for wildlife. Make your backyard bird and wildlife friendly by providing food, water, and shelter – the three things that all animals need to sustain themselves and raise their young.

### **Why use Native Plants?**

Native plants provide habitat and food for birds, butterflies and other wildlife; conserve water; and minimize mowing needs. And because they have already adapted to local soil, rainfall and temperature conditions, they've developed natural defenses to many insects and diseases, which helps reduce the need to use fertilizers, pesticides and insecticides. Wildlife species have co-evolved with them, and depend on these native plant communities to thrive and survive.

Planting native species like Bee Balm, Black-Eyed Susan, Winterberry Holly, Shadbush and Viburnums will draw an array of fruit, nectar, and insect eating birds at different times of the year. Insects are valuable to every garden as they do double duty as both pollinators and natural pest control.

### **Make your backyard a native plant habitat!**

- ✦ Plant a diverse array of native plants to supply food, cover, and shelter for birds and wildlife
- ✦ Encourage biodiversity by reducing your lawn and planting native grasses, flowers, and shrubs
- ✦ Limit exotic plants and try to eliminate invasive plants that don't support native wildlife
- ✦ Leave perennials standing through winter to provide cover
- ✦ Keep cats indoors to protect our declining songbirds
- ✦ Provide a water source for wildlife and insects





# CABIN GETAWAY

all yours for one week

AUDUBON FUNDRAISER / \$25 drawing ticket

YOUR CHOICE WEEK - Summer / 2015  
fully equipped for overnight camping or day use  
located in Rensselaerville, NY / Hudson Valley Region  
*private birding paradise for you to experience*



[www.capitalregionaudubon.org](http://www.capitalregionaudubon.org)





**CABIN  
GETAWAY**  
all yours  
for one week  
**AUDUBON  
FUNDRAISER**



**YOUR CHOICE WEEK - Summer / 2015**

(May or June best for birding)

fully equipped for overnight camping or day use

*private birding paradise for you to experience*

(or just a peaceful unplugged week in the country)

**THE DETAILS:**

*Birding* / open fields, brush areas, deep old forests, walking paths, short walk to 10 mile creek. Home to nesting of Indigo Buntings in 2014.

*Accommodations* / historic post and beam cabin, sleeps 1-2 comfortably, solar shower, outhouse, screened kitchen tent next to cabin includes outside dining table, grill and firewood, additional access to microwave and refrigerator on property for not-so-rustic birders. Sleeping options include full size air mattress in the loft, accessible by ladder or a fold out bed (also a great afternoon napping cot) on the first floor.

*Location* / Hudson Valley Region, Rensselaerville, New York, 40 mins. from Albany, 3 hrs. from NYC and Boston, 30 mins. from Hudson, 5 miles from the Huyck Preserve.

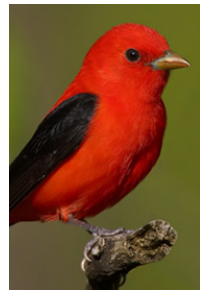
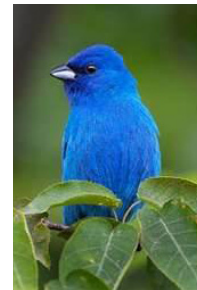
*Other Local Attractions* / hiking trails to see Middleburg Peregrine Falcons at Vroman's Nose, kayak access to paddle at Franklinton Vlaie where Bald Eagles are often seen, and the Huyck Preserve to walk wooded trails to the Rensselaerville Falls and around Lake Myosotis.

*A birding wanna-be or want to advance your birding skills?* Consider scheduling a complimentary, expert led birdwalk by one of our Audubon bird walk leaders during your stay.

*Local Eateries* / The acclaimed Palmer House Cafe, The Yellow Deli, Mountain View Brasserie

*The Drawing* 4/26/15. (Audubon's Birthday)  
Drawing tickets, \$25 each. See website for details. [www.capitalregionaudubon.org](http://www.capitalregionaudubon.org)

*Additional add-on opportunities for purchase:*  
private birding guide services, one on one nature drawing classes with local artist or a nature writing workshop with local author.



The Audubon Society of the Capital Region, the local chapter of the National Audubon Society, is dedicated to the protection, conservation and enjoyment of birds, wildlife and the environment in the Capital Region of New York State. Our mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

We are dedicated to protecting nature and connecting with others using the combination of science, education, and the restoration of our local wildlife habitats. Donations are the driving force behind all of our educational programs, conservation action and professional field trips.

**AUDUBON FUNDRAISER / \$25** drawing ticket  
**[www.capitalregionaudubon.org](http://www.capitalregionaudubon.org)**

To Note: No smoking, pets or loud music. Specific week is dependent on availability / summer 2015. May and June are recommended for birders. Exact location disclosed to drawing winner only. Internet and cell phone accessible at barn on property but not currently available at the cabin. Possibility to reschedule week because of weather conditions acceptable to property owner. A complete and detailed list of amenities provided to winner for planning purposes. Winner will need to provide the property owner a security deposit and a signed liability waiver. Deposit will be returned upon departure. The drawing will take place, April 26th 2015. The winner will be notified via email or phone and must respond within 2 days to claim cabin getaway.