



Spring 2019 WINGBEATS

Newsletter of the Audubon Society of the Capital Region of New York State

The Audubon Society of the Capital Region welcomes the 2019 Board volunteers.

On Saturday, February 23, 2019 ASCR and Peebles Island State Park hosted Professor Davis of SUNY Albany, who presented his research on Short Eared Owls and their Habitat Preferences on the Montezuma Wetlands Complex (MWC). His whimsical and down to earth presentation style delighted attendees. Special thanks to the staff at Peebles Island State Park who provided space, heat and support for this event. Before this presentation, the Audubon membership voted in the 2019 Officers and Board members.

Officers:

President: Rebecca Allmond
Vice President: Erin Allen
Treasurer: René Facchetti
Correspondence Officer, Fred Bockis
Recording Officer (open)

Board of Directors:

Mark Silo,
Jennifer Ford,
Eric Latini

If you'd like to know more about these volunteers who help run the chapter, check out page 4!

Audubon has a new intern for Summer 2019

Please welcome Nichole Fox to our Audubon flock!



Nichole is a senior working towards her B.S. in Biology at SUNY Albany. She grew up in Saratoga where she shared a subtle Audubon presence with her grandfather, who owned at least a couple Audubon guides.

New to the Albany area Nichole loves to stay busy, and enjoys exploring the area in her free time. She has an interest in nature/landscape photography, and also identifies as an amateur equestrian. She works on a farm in Wilton in exchange for training as a rider with a focus in English, hunter/jumper and French dressage disciplines.

Nichole is exploring biological fields geared toward environmental sciences and conservation, and would like to end up with a career in the field. She is very excited to be a part of the Audubon team this summer! For the next several months Nicole will focus on enhancing and promoting conservation projects with ASCR and engaging current volunteers and reaching out to the diverse communities within the Capital Region.

If you'd like to know how you can get involved, or if your organization would like to partner with ASCR and the work we do, please connect with us at info@capitalregionaudubon.org.

In This Issue...

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Welcome New Team!..... | 1 |
| Upcoming ASCR Events | 2 |
| Volunteer Opportunities..... | 3 |
| Meet the Board..... | 4 |
| Advocacy & Conservation..... | 5 |
| NYS Budget wins & Nest Box Notes.... | 6 |
| Board Members & Working Groups..... | 7 |

Upcoming Events

Audubon Lobby Day. Tuesday, May 21.

Please consider joining Audubon NY in Albany to meet with elected officials about three important issues this legislative session: bird friendly buildings, increasing wetlands protections, and expanding the bottle bill. It's okay if you have never done this before. The most important thing is to have constituents from around the state to help tell the story of Audubon's local work, and why we care about these issues. It will be fun! Register here to help us plan by the end of April: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeWdRdpQyCrfGAJ9N9Yi887LnxBYuB0Et-JJ7VJSHTdHUsqEQ/viewform>

Tabling Events:

Come find us at one of these upcoming events

Lupine Festival. Saturday, May 18, 10am-4pm Albany Pine Bush 302 Washington Ave. Ext. Albany NY, 12205

ASCR Board Meeting

Monday, May 13, Loudonville

Want to discover how to unlock more bird and nature programs in the Capital Region? Explore the power of influence at the ASCR board meeting! Without folks like you to help us put something on the books—programs vanish! Please consider coordinating, organizing, leading a program for the public. Simple is best! Got a passion for planning small events in the capital region, consider working with us as a Program Coordinator! Don't have ideas? That's ok—we simply need someone to say 'yes!' info@capitalregionaudubon.org

Not ready to contribute here? That's ok -check out our partners who put in a lot of hours to offer nature programs to the community:

[Landis Arboretum](#)

[Hudson Mohawk Bird Club](#)

[Thatcher State Park](#)

[Schodack Island State Park](#)

[Peebles Island State Park](#)

[Fiver Rivers Environmental Education Center](#)

[Albany Rural Cemetery](#)



Be sure to check our website for more programs and information!
www.capitalregionaudubon.org

Looking to have an impact in your community?

Become an Audubon Society of the Capital Region

Chapter Supporter.

As a Chapter Supporter, 100% of your membership dues stay local. This helps us support local conservation efforts, continue to promote birding and bird education, and to support other special initiatives, such as the construction of bird blinds and camp sponsorships for youth. The Chapter Supporter membership is just \$20. In return you get:

- An official ASCR Chapter Supporter Membership card
- An ASCR Chapter Supporter window cling to prevent window strikes
- The satisfaction of knowing you are supporting local birds and their habitats

Click [here](#) for more information on how you can become an ASCR Chapter Supporter!!



“What’d I Miss?”

We got all excited to offer our annual bird walk at the Albany Rural Cemetery in April. However heavy rains, winds and cold steered us to cancel this walk. Though misery loves company, no one thought a fun time would be had by birds or humans alike. We are working to reschedule this popular bird walk for the fall!

VOLUNTEER

Excerpts from

“Atlas Corner: The Joys of Atlasing”

by Julie Hart, NY BBA III Project Coordinator

This article first appeared in New York Birders, the newsletter of the New York State Ornithological Association (NYSOA) April 2019.

You may have heard people say how atlasing is a different way of birding and an extremely rewarding one at that. But what does this mean? How exactly is atlas birding different from normal birding? Why is it so rewarding? And you may be asking yourself, how can I become familiar with atlas birding before the project begins in 2020? In this article we'll answer these questions and more.

What is atlasing and how is it rewarding?

Atlasing is like regular birding but you slow down and observe the behaviors of individual birds.

How do I practice atlasing and entering my observations ?

The atlas doesn't start until 2020, but you don't have to wait to start enjoying this type of birding. You can practice your atlasing skills right now. Some birds are already nesting, while others are courting and setting up territories. Start small by watching the birds in your backyard or favorite park. If you see a behavior and you don't know what it means, look it up. The Cornell Lab's "[All About Birds](#)" site is a good place to start. If it turns out to be a breeding behavior, note the behavior on your checklist.

Join the Breeding Bird Atlas Community Online!

The Atlas [Website](#) is where we will provide birdwatching tips, field methods, how to use eBird, block maps, answers to frequently asked questions, news and events, you name it! The website is in the nestling stage but will be growing quickly over the next few months.

Follow us on [FaceBook](#) or on [Instagram](#) to share your stories, photos, and videos, ask questions, and discover events happening near you.

Read more about Julie's journey to joining the Breeding Bird Atlas Community here: <https://nybirds.org/Articles/NewsFromNYSOA/AtlasUpdate-Apr2019.pdf>



Additional Opportunities

Bald Eagle Nest Watch

Come help monitor a Bald Eagle nest near Hudson, NY. This involves monitoring the nest for at least one hour per week during the nesting season, and submitting data on nest activity.

Program Chair Needed

We are looking for a highly motivated and creative individual to help get involved with creating and sustaining current programs for ASCR. Minimum commitment is to attend regular board meetings and help coordinate programs for the chapter. Training is provided.

Bird Walk Leaders desired

Do you know birds in the Capital Region? Do you like people? Would you like to share your knowledge with new and curious birders? Come be a bird walk leader with Audubon!

Recording Officer Needed

Are you a good note taker? We need you! Commitment is one board meeting per month to take meeting notes and email them to the Board.

Interested in any of these opportunities?

Contact

President@CapitalRegionAudubon.org



Meet the Board

Erin Allen, Vice President

Erin returns for her second year volunteering with ASCR. She is the chapter's Vice-President and a current graduate student enrolled in the Biodiversity and Conservation Program at SUNY Albany. Formerly a middle school teacher, Erin's passion for birding and the environment has been a boon to this chapter. When not keeping ASCR organized, Erin is finishing her Master's Thesis, which is focused on pollinators and agriculture in New York State. Erin enjoys birding, nature, and keeping it real.



busy advocating for the environment, you can find Rene building things with wood or stone, landscaping, planting rare or exotic trees, shuffling his three children to and from school events, helping the school and local community or playing his guitar

Jennifer Ford, Board Officer

Jennifer is ASCR's newest member of the board, joining for 2019! She is a biology teacher who has been teaching for 23 years and is also a NYS Master Naturalist. She and her husband have been beekeepers for over a decade, and also keep chickens and produce maple syrup. In her spare time she enjoys birdwatching, nature journaling, spending time with friends and family, and going for walks in the woods with her rescue dog, Abby. ASCR is excited to have Jennifer join our team!



Rebecca Allmond, President

Rebecca returns for her second year as President, and fifth year volunteering the chapter. Rebecca is involved with running the chapter, editing the Newsletter, maintaining social media, and much, much more. During the day she works for the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets on programming that occurs at Farmers Markets in the state. When she isn't working or volunteering with ASCR, Rebecca enjoys kayaking, butterflying, hiking and watching copious amounts of Netflix with her cat, Isabelle.



Fred Bockis, Communications Officer

Fred has been volunteering with ASCR since June 2011 and is the current Chair of Membership. A former Russian linguist, Fred retired from government work and from the US Navy reserves. Fred always wanted to do birding when he stopped working, and when a former ASCR president came knocking Fred found himself swept up by the enthusiasm for birds and birding. When Fred is not volunteering with ASCR, he enjoys local free science lectures, woodworking, chess, ice skating, and crossword puzzles.



Eric Latini, Board Officer

Eric began with ASCR in 2011 and is current co-chair of our Conservation and Advocacy Working Group. Eric has played a vital role in the creation and distribution of the Taingle-Tainers, and is one of ASCR's top birders! His ear for bird song is likely due to his extensive musical talents. When Eric isn't volunteering, he is winning Grammy's with the Albany Symphony! A trumpet player by profession, he studied at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston and currently performs with the Albany Symphony and Glimmerglass Opera and is the Trumpet Professor at Skidmore College and the College of Saint Rose.



Mark Silo, Board Officer

First volunteering with ASCR in 2017, Mark, now, is an active contributor to *WingsBeats*, and is the Conservation and Advocacy co-chair. A native of Yonkers, he spent his professional career in transportation engineering, and recently retired as an Assistant Commissioner at the NYS D.O.T. He has served his local community as a member of the Town of Colonie Planning Board and Conservation Council, and currently volunteers at Habitat for Humanity and at his local church. Mark is an avid student of American history and is the author of "The 115th New York in the Civil War," the unit history of a local civil war regiment. He and his wife Kathy reside in Loudonville, while finding summer refuge at their log cabin on the Schroon River in the Adirondacks.



Rene Facchetti, Treasurer

Rene has been involved in ASCR since 1986, he became the Newsletter editor as a teen and has since served in such roles as Web Master, Board Member and Treasurer. When not volunteering, he runs Platinum ITS, Inc. a tech company in the Capital Region, which is one of the region's oldest IT Solution companies. Rene has actively participated in environmental conservation initiatives for over 40 years. When he's not



ADVOCACY CORNER

This year Audubon Society of the Capital Region, among many other chapters, signed on to support the following initiatives. The follow is as summarized from Audubon NY.

Overview of appropriations letters:

In previous years, the HOW coalition has submitted to Congress a single letter detailing our priorities in the annual appropriations process. As the number of programs critical to continuing and enhancing restoration efforts across the region have grown, we find that to ensure the Coalition is able to more accurately and effectively detail and advocate for our priorities we should split up our asks into multiple letters. The Appropriations Committees in Congress are subdivided into 12 subcommittees, of which five directly appropriate funds for our priorities. The attached letters are to the following subcommittees and make requests for:

Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

This subcommittee has jurisdiction over the EPA and the DOI (including USGS and FWS). This includes funding for the GLRI, the USGS and FWS's invasive species activities and research, and the array of EPA clean water and water infrastructure grant programs. The letter details the importance of these programs and makes our respective FY2020 funding requests.

Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies

This subcommittee has jurisdiction over funding for the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. This includes the Corps role in protecting the basin from Asian carp through investments in the Brandon Road project pre-construction, in addition to enhancing Great Lakes restoration and resiliency through research and coastal infrastructure improvements. The letter details these programs and makes our respective FY2020 funding requests.

Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

This subcommittee has jurisdiction over NOAA programs. This includes funding for the Great Lakes Environmental Research Lab, the Great Lakes Observing System, research into HABs, and several grant programs like Sea Grant and the Coastal Zone Management Grants. The letter details these programs and makes our respective FY2020 funding requests.

Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

This subcommittee has jurisdiction over the USDA and Farm Bill programs. This includes the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and its programs important for providing the technical assistance and investments needed to reduce agricultural runoff and its impact on water quality and the growing threat of HABs. The letter details these programs and makes our respective FY2020 funding requests.

State, Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies

This subcommittee has jurisdiction over the State Department who funds and operates the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission. The letter details this program and makes our respective FY2020 funding request.

Native Plants for Birds

Looking to spend some time in your garden this spring? Why not consider installing botanical beauties that are native to the area, and provide habitat and food source for our birds!

What is a native plant? While there may be some variances on the definition, the [National Wildlife Federation](#) defines it as a plant that "has occurred naturally in a particular region, ecosystem, or habitat without human introduction". While this may exclude a lot of landscaping staples like Japanese maple or flowering pear, it includes a vast array of flowers, trees and shrubs that not only expand local native habitat, but also a diet of fruits nuts and berries that species here have come to delight in and depend on.



National Audubon Society has developed a Native Plants for Birds Database that lists out the plants that work in your area based on zip code. You will need to provide your email address for the full list. You can tailor to the category you're looking for (trees, shrubs, etc.) or just look at the myriad of options for your yard. :) Check out the Plants for Birds Database here: <https://www.audubon.org/native-plants>

Once you have identified what to shop for, please consider where to shop. Local plant nurseries offer a wide variety of beautiful and healthy plants to select from, and typically they really know their plants! However, finding plants that are native to the northeast, may be a bit more of a challenge. Below we put together a quick list of nursery options, and by no means is this an endorsement of one business over another. This is also not a complete list, but merely a place to start. We welcome additions to the list if you find a plant nursery that sells native plants. :)

Sells natives plants:

[Fiddle Head Creek Farm and Nursery](#), Ft. Ann NY
[WildThings Rescue Nursery](#), Valley Falls, NY
[Faddegons](#), Latham, NY

May sell natives plants:

Hewitts Garden Centers, Capital Region
Georges Landscape and Nurseries, Latham
Brookside Nursery, Ballston Spa
Toadflax Nursery, S Glens Falls
Black Creek Nursery, Altamont
Beckers Farm, Rensselaer
Kulaks Nursery, Rexford
Saratoga Tree Nursery, Saratoga Springs
Sunnyside Gardens, Saratoga Springs

And finally, native plant sales by local nature centers, may also be a source, so keep your eyes out for pop up Native Plant Sales!

Dear Audubon Flock:

Thank you for being a strong voice for birds! The highlights below could not have happened without your support and hard work. New York State finalized its SFY 2019-20 Enacted Budget which includes several important proposals that Audubon New York successfully advocated for, including \$300 million for the Environmental Protection Fund, \$500 million in capital funding for Clean Water Infrastructure, and a ban on single-use plastic bags. Here are the **Audubon-supported Proposals in New York State's Enacted Budget**:

- **Environmental Protection Fund.** New York State provided an additional \$300 million for the Environmental Protection fund, which protects clean water, open space, working lands, forests, parks, and waterfronts – helping birds and people thrive. 100 percent of that funding will be used for capital projects that benefit the environment and local communities. This includes an increase to the Zoos, Botanical Gardens, and Aquaria Program, full funding for the Ocean and Great Lakes Initiative, and \$500,000 for Regenerate NY, which will benefit New York State's declining woodland birds.
- **Ban on Single-Use Plastic Bags.** Plastics have become an abundant pollutant in our oceans and pose a major threat to marine and coastal wildlife. On average, an estimated 8 million metric tons of plastic enter the ocean each year due to littering, illegal dumping, and poor waste management on land and at sea. The budget bans the use of plastic bags in New York State and allows counties to opt in to a fee on paper – a portion of which would be directed to the Environmental Protection Fund.
- **Increased Funding for Clean Water Infrastructure.** We all share a need for clean water. The budget includes an additional \$500 million in funding for clean water infrastructure – providing another significant down payment on the state's \$80 billion need for improved drinking water and wastewater systems and protect source waters.

We thank all of you who spoke up, wrote letters, sent email and we thank Audubon NY for all the hard work they do to see these initiatives moves forward!

Notes from the Nest Box

On Wednesday, April 3, 2019 Fred Bockis checked on 4 nest boxes we installed for Kestrels.

The box at Liberty Ridge Farms had active nesting where the mother bird (hopefully a Kestrel) added 4 inches of bedding (sticks and leaves) on top of the 3 inches of wood shaving Fred put down initially. Fred observed that the mother had dug a tapered 5 inch deep hole, 3 inches wide on top in preparation of hosting an egg. The bedding looked fresh and active. The second box at that site appeared inactive as it has been for the last two years. The initial three inches of wood shaving was intact with no visible bird activity.



Kestral Nest. Fred Bockis April 3, 2019

At Indian Ladder farms, our first box had bird nesting activity, though, maybe not what we were hoping for. A bird or something else, filled the entire kestrel box cavity to just under the level of the bottom of the entry hole. That's a lot of leaves! We'll probably just leave this wonderful home as is until we decide to adjust it. The final box at this site does not appear to be inhabited. Last year this nest had with a Kestrel and an egg in it on by May 10, but Fred saw no activity this year. Fred did note that one thing different this year is a new dirt road right next to the tree where the box is mounted. This human activity may have scared off a potential and returning Kestrel, and we may have to move the box.



Working Group Descriptions

ASCR is dedicated to the protection and conservation of birds, wildlife and the environment.

Membership & Volunteers

Leaders: Fred Bockis

Maintain membership records. Recruits and Coordinates volunteers and chapter members for ASCR events and to support the mission of the chapter.

Programs

Leader: Vacant

Coordinates speakers, workshops and other outreach programs to the public.

Conservation & Advocacy

Leaders: Eric Latini & Mark Silo

Oversees conservation projects and initiatives. Reviews, initiates, collaborates in advocacy policies and activities.

Marketing & Communications

Leader: Rebecca Allmond

Publications, chapter member communications and information, advertise events, update social media outlets, photograph events.

Education

Leader: Vacant

Educational programming, Citizen Science initiatives, Christmas Bird Count, etc.

Finance

Leader: René Facchetti

Budgets, fundraising, grant writing.

Board members of the Audubon Society of the Capital Region

An All Volunteer Chapter Organization of the National Audubon Society

Officers

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| President: | Rebecca Allmond |
| Vice President: | Erin Allen |
| Correspondence Officer: | Fred Bockis |
| Treasurer: | René Facchetti |
| Recording Officer: | vacant |

Directors

Jennifer Ford
Eric Latini
Mark Silo

| | |
|------------|-----------------|
| WebMaster: | René Facchetti |
| WebAdmin: | Rebecca Allmond |

Board Meetings are the Second Mondays of Every Month in Loudonville. We will discuss upcoming events and make decisions that guide this chapter for the year.

Please join us!

Email President@CapitalRegionAudubon.org for more information!

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

Questions?

Email: info@capitalregionaudubon.org