



Winter 2016

# WINGBEATS

## **ASCR Annual Meeting & Elections** ***featuring a Free & Open to the Public*** **presentation on the** **Utica Peregrine Falcon Project**

**Saturday February 6th, 2016**  
**~ Presentation starts at 1:00pm ~**

**Location:** **Mabee Farm Historic Site**  
1100 Main Street, Rotterdam Jct., NY 12150

Can Schenectady, NY be a home for Peregrine Falcons?  
Two have been seen flying above downtown last year and  
one has found the upper ledge of the Parker Inn on  
Broadway a perfect place to sun itself and scout for prey.

Matthew Perry of the Utica Peregrine Falcon Project will  
share a fascinating presentation on his work fostering the  
first and second pairs of Peregrine Falcons to nest and  
fledge young in downtown Utica, NY. Peregrine Falcons  
were first noticed in this small Central New York  
downtown in the mid-1990's, but it wasn't until 2007 that  
a territorial pair was first identified.

After the presentation, we invite the public to join  
Audubon Chapter Supporters and "Not-Yet-Chapter  
Supporters" to a **mixer & bird trivia** event  
with **Schenectady County Historical Society** members!

## **A Sanctuary for the Birds** **By John Loz**

At 467 acres, the quiet and peaceful landscape of  
**Albany Rural Cemetery** is also the perfect habitat for  
birds. With its forests of diverse tree species, open grassy  
areas, and varied water features from streams to ponds, it  
is the perfect stop-over for migrating birds to rest as well  
as providing a secluded habitat for breeding and nesting  
birds of all kinds. One could say it is the perfect  
'sanctuary' for the birds.

As our 'Avian Haunts' History and Bird Walk group  
discovered this past May 30<sup>th</sup>, there was a high variety of  
bird species flying above and singing around our 35+  
person group. The distinctive sound of an Eastern Wood  
Pewee, the undulating flight calls of American  
Goldfinches flying overhead, and to those of us who  
heard it, a single Baltimore Oriole sang deep in the  
woods along Middle Ridge Road. Not only did we also  
hear the sweet songs of a Song Sparrow and Great  
Crested Flycatcher, but had a great view of a Purple



Purple Finch (*Haemorhous purpureus*)

Finch, perched high above, hopping around sparsely  
leafed branches of a tree. Aside from songbirds, we saw  
a few groups of Canada Geese flying in their familiar V-  
formation and a Red-tailed Hawk circling overhead  
looking for its next small mammalian victim. Downy and  
Hairy Woodpeckers were seen and the haunting call of a  
Northern Flicker echoed through the trees. As the group  
dispersed, two of us were even able to spy on a typically  
reclusive Green Heron standing motionless in the North  
Pond. 32 species in all were seen just that morning.  
(**RURAL** continued on Page 5.)

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## WINTER PROGRAMS AND EVENTS!

### Bundle Up and join ASCR on Mid-winter Bald Eagle Surveys!

Help us put more eyes to the sky as we hike the trails of these two state parks looking for juvenile and adult Bald Eagles and other sightings of winter birds! This survey is sponsored by the Army Corps of Engineers and our recorded sightings will be submitted to DEC and the Army Corps. Sightings of bald eagles aren't always guaranteed, but hot chocolate and snacks will be a definite sighting after a fun hike in the winter woods! Please dress warmly and bring binoculars!

**Saturday January 9th @ 10am**

**Schodack Island State Park**

**1 Schodack Island Way  
Schodack Landing, NY 12156  
(Just south of Castleton-on-Hudson on Route 9J)**

**Sunday January 10th @ 10am**

**Peebles Island State Park**

**1 Delaware Avenue  
Waterford, NY 12188  
Meet at the Visitors Center**

### Hudson Valley Bald Eagles

**Saturday January 23rd, 2016**

**Location:** Guilderland Public Library, 2228 Western Ave, Guilderland, NY 12084 - *FREE Presentation!*

**Time:** 2:30pm Audubon Society of the Capital Region activities. 3:00pm Bald Eagle presentation begins.

**Speaker:** Tom Lake, Hudson River Estuary Program Naturalist, NYS DEC

Since 1782, the Bald Eagle has been our national bird. However, the last 230 years have been difficult for them. The talk will travel across those centuries to see how the Bald Eagle evolved from an honored symbol to a target for human ignorance and neglect. This downward spiral culminated in the mid-20th century with their extirpation from New York State from the effects of DDT. They were subsequently placed on the Federal Endangered Species List. The final chapter in this story finds the Bald Eagle rising from near ruin to their present day abundance.

### ASCR Annual Meeting and Elections

*Mabee Farm and Historic Site*

**Saturday, February 6, 2016 - See front page for details!**

### Wilton Wildlife Preserve & Park Presentation

**Monday March 7th, 2016**

**Location:** William K. Sanford Library, 629 Albany Shaker Rd, Albany, NY 12211

**Time:** 7:00 to 8:30pm - *Free and Open to the Public!* Co-presented w/ [Hudson Mohawk Bird Club](#)

The largest population of the endangered Karner blue butterfly in the eastern United States is found in [Wilton Wildlife Preserve & Park](#). The protection of the lands within the Saratoga Sandplains ecosystem has been a priority effort of NYSDEC. This presentation will cover the formation of the Preserve & Park the fire-dependent ecosystem of the Sandplains & the natural history of the Karner blue butterfly, among other needs.



## Wayward Sparrow Brings Canned Goods to First Church Food Pantry

by John Paarlberg

Early one Wednesday morning while looking in the direction of the bird feeders on our back deck, among the juncos, chickadees, nuthatches and titmice, I noticed an unusually marked (to me) sparrow. A quick check of the field guide told me it was Harris's Sparrow, a bird that breeds along the edge of boreal forest and tundra in north-central Canada and winters in the Great Plains, rarely venturing east of the Mississippi. This bird was way off course. Others might be interested in knowing about this, I thought. I had recently learned of a birding website called E-Bird, so I posted the information there. Little was I aware of the chain of events that would ensue. E Bird, apparently, has a lot of avid and avian-loving followers.

The local birding guru, Rich Guthrie, who has a call-in show on WAMC radio's Vox Pop, showed up with a couple of colleagues and confirmed the sighting. "A lot of birders are going to want to see this," he said. "Why don't I coordinate a schedule of visits? And as a way for people to say 'thank you' for allowing them into your backyard, I'll put out a box & suggest that birders bring some food donations for the church's food pantry."

"That's not necessary," I said. "But it's a nice gesture, so sure, go ahead."

Later that day and over the course of the next several days Harris' Sparrow admirers came from as far away as Long Island and Buffalo. Ornithologists from Cornell Lab in Ithaca paid a visit. At times our backyard was host to dozens of people toting binoculars, spotting scopes, cameras, and telephoto lenses—as well as canned goods and cash donations for the First Church food pantry.



It's not the first time a bird has brought food to the hungry. When the prophet Elijah was hiding from King Ahab, God commanded ravens to bring him a daily ration of bread and meat. (I Kings 17). In fact, this little sparrow has been instrumental in helping people obey a trinity of Biblical commands: "Look at the birds of the air" (Matthew 6), "extend hospitality to strangers" (Romans 12), and "share your bread with the hungry" (Isaiah 58).

As I write this, "Harry" is still in residence, although intermittently and elusively. You are welcome to come and have a look. Bring your binoculars—and a couple of cans of vegetables or boxes of macaroni. 🐦

**UPDATE:** 'Harry' has moved on, but you can still donate non-perishable items to First Church Food Pantry at: The First Church in Albany, 110 North Pearl Street, Albany, NY - Pantry Hours: 9:00 to 11:30am Mon & Wed.

**What's out your back window? Join the Great Backyard Bird Count!**  
**February 12-15, 2016**

**Bird watchers of all ages count birds to create a real-time snapshot of where birds are!**

Launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, the Great Backyard Bird Count was the first online citizen-science project to collect data on wild birds and to display results in near real-time.

**Want to participate? All you have to do is look out your back window! Sign up at: <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/>**

## Second Highest Number of Species Found During 29th Annual Albany County Christmas Bird Count

by **Alan Mapes**  
Count Compiler

On Sunday December 20th, twenty-five people participated in the 29th annual Albany County Christmas Bird Count. The 74 species found by our 8 field parties was the second highest number in the count's history, tying the 1998 count and second only to the 81 species found in 2001.

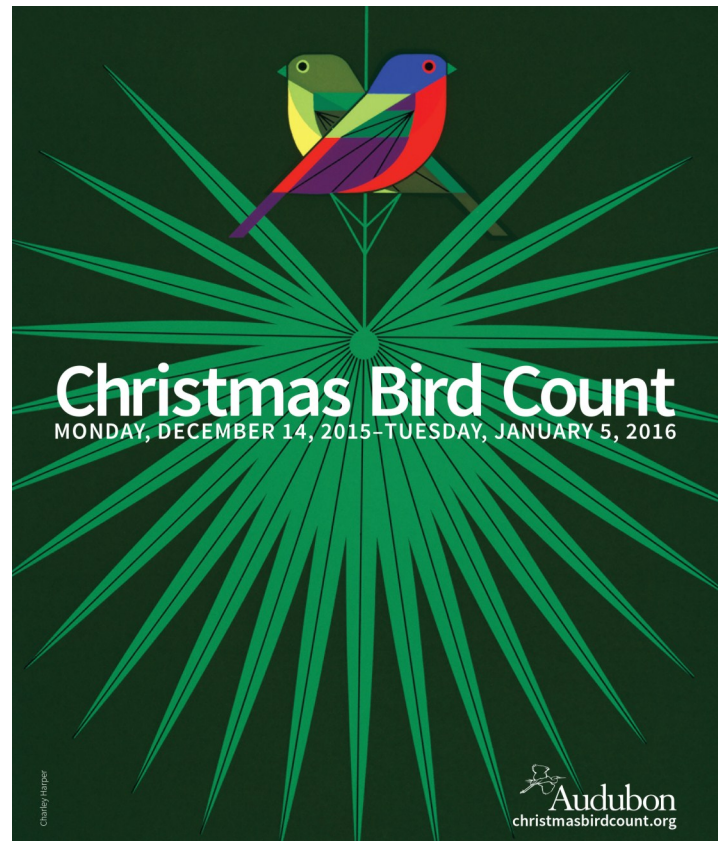
New for the count was our first American Woodcock, found in the Schodack Island State Park sector, along the Hudson River. Also in that sector was a single ruby-crowned kinglet, only the second one found in all the years of the count.

Highest-ever numbers were set for a number of species this year, including gadwall, common merganser, peregrine falcon (2), red-bellied woodpecker (80 found vs. the previous record of 55), pileated woodpecker, blue jay and white-breasted nuthatch.


Several other species had the second-highest counts ever, including hooded merganser, bald eagle (21 sightings), American crow, common raven, and dark-eyed junco.

Quite high numbers were recorded for great blue heron (4), American black duck, mourning dove, downy woodpecker, black-capped chickadee, tufted titmouse and American goldfinch. Waterfowl numbers and variety in general were high, with nearly all the waters free of ice. Purple finch numbers were the highest since 1996 at 95 birds.

Only one northern harrier was found and significant declines were seen in Carolina wren and eastern bluebird (possibly due to the past severe winter). Wild turkey were found in the lowest numbers since the year 2000.



Other notable finds were a northern goshawk, a yellow-rumped warbler, a swamp sparrow, several red-winged blackbirds, and two pine siskins.

Thanks go to our count sponsor, the Audubon Society of the Capital Region, and to all the participants who spent a long day in the chilly winds to conduct the count. 



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**Check us out at:**



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(*RURAL continued from page 1*) Songbirds (or passerines), birds of prey, waterfowl, and even wading birds all use this 'preserve' if you will, as their home.


Spring and Summer are not the only seasons to visit this 'sanctuary' when looking for our avian friends. Winter is just as active with birds foraging on frozen berries and flying to and from their shelter in cavities of dead trees and under shrubbery. One can never get tired of seeing the blazing red



Great Crested Flycatcher ( *Myiarchus crinitus* )

feathers of a Northern Cardinal against bright snow, and the friendly sounds of a Black-capped Chickadee as it follows you on your walk along the quiet cemetery roads, hopefully on a crisp, blue sky, solstice day.

I encourage you to bundle up, bring along a hot drink in a thermos, and keep your binoculars at the ready to spy on those cold weather birds that frequent these hallowed grounds. Enjoy birding at the cemetery casually or, as a 'citizen scientist' reporting your cemetery bird sightings on the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org) website. Additionally, the [Great Backyard Bird Count](#), or GBBC, is coming in February for four days around President's Day weekend. This is another great way to get involved with your friends and family outdoors during the long cold days of winter.

Albany Rural is a sanctuary that preserves the memories of our loved ones as well as being a place of reflection. Whether we're reflecting on the lives of those who have passed on or are seeing the reflections of birds flying on the still surface of a cemetery pond, being out in the natural habitat of the cemetery breathes life into those who visit there. 

John Loz  
Presidential Committee Chair, Audubon Society of the Capital Region, a chapter of the National Audubon Society



Downy Woodpecker ( *Picoides pubescens* )



Green Heron ( *Butorides virescens* )



American Goldfinch ( *Spinus tristis* )



Would you like to Volunteer with like-minded people at a Fun and Rewarding environmental organization?

**Do you like:**

**Taking pictures?**

**Writing? Editing?**

**Getting Outdoors & Gardening?**

**Building stuff? Trail Work?**

Write Us at the address below or email:  
[president@capitalregionaudubon.org](mailto:president@capitalregionaudubon.org)

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## Wild Bird Word Search

Try to find the following backyard bird feeding words by searching backwards, forwards, up, down and diagonally.

FEATHERS	FLY	FEEDER	NESTBOX
BIRDBATH	BACKYARD	WATER	SQUIRREL
TREAT	FINCH	TREES	BIRDSONG
MIGRATE	CHICKADEE	FLEDGLING	PERCH
ENVIRONMENT	SUNFLOWER	GROSBEAK	THISTLE
BEAK	HOPPER	TITMOUSE	WINGS
TAIL	WHISTLE	WREN	JUNCO
CARDINAL	TUBULAR	SUET	

T R E E S A W F L E D G C G X F H K  
 B W N E F B A C K Y A R D O K D C U  
 C H V R L G T J R L H N B M O L R R  
 A I F E E D E R R E T T E L S W E N  
 R S S X D W R N D H S U L O R M P I  
 D T I T G H O P P E R A S E M G U L  
 I T A I L J F L N F E E N U N E S Q  
 F N K E I E K S F S M T H I S T L E  
 J E A L N A B P R N A T G V W N K G  
 G M H M G O I C T E U S A I I W N L  
 N N S D O W R E R B H S U O N I W A  
 O O C N U J D T U O E T A R G I M N  
 S R F B I R B L H S E K A E S J I I  
 D I E S U N A S Q U I R R E L U E D  
 R Y A A U R T A G W H C N I F L Y R  
 I N T C L C H I C K A D E E L C V A  
 B E A K A E B S O R G M I F A H D C  
 D W H I S T L E S U O M T I T S B N

Audubon Society  
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**The Audubon Society of the Capital Region sends our  
Deepest Sympathies to the Families of:**

**Jack Middleton**

**A Generous Supporter of  
our Annual Fall Bird Seed  
Sale Fundraiser**

**Charles Koban**



**A Passionate Teacher  
and an  
Avid Lover of Birds**

**Please join us in Applauding our  
Renewing Supporters and New  
Chapter Supporters!**

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Naomi Lloyd  
Betsey Kuzia  
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**Donors In Memory of Charles Koban**

~~~~~

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**Thank You... In - Memory - Of Donors**

**In acknowledgement of a donation by:**

**Sally Ruschmeier**

**In Memory of her Brother-In-Law**

**Holiday Gift Membership Recipients**

Janet Angelis from Sharon Wiles  
Rebecca Allmond from Edward Allmond  
Barbara & Steve Wickham from  
Connie and Gordon

## **\*2016 ASCR Nominations and Election Slate Notice**

Our Board of Directors election slate for 2016 Officers and Directors was not finalized at the time of this printing. Please visit our website @:  
[www.capitalregionaudubon.org](http://www.capitalregionaudubon.org) and [Facebook](#) page in the coming weeks to see the our nominees to be elected at our February 6th Annual Meeting.

We apologize for any inconvenience, but please stop by the Mabee Farm on February 6th to vote for and meet your new Audubon Society of the Capital Region representatives!



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

## **A HUGE Thank You!** **To *Everyone* who supported our 2015** **Annual Fall Birdseed Sale!**

**A Special Thank You goes out to...Patricia Greene-Dehn!  
She surprised our Pick-up Day Volunteers with a Big Box  
of Donuts to sustain them on that cold morning!**

***If you're running low on your  
fundraiser seed, you can find  
Aspen Song Wild Bird Food at  
Checkerhills Farm, who kindly  
supports our fundraiser by  
giving us space when we  
place our order for delivery!***

**Checkerhills Farm  
53 Freemans Bridge Road  
Glenville, NY 12302**

