



WINGBEATS

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

-Winter 2021/2022-

Audubon Society of the Capital Region: An Endangered Species?

The Audubon Society of the Capital Region (ASCR) has a long history in the area with periods of inactivity dotting the tenure of the local organization. ASCR relies solely on volunteers to keep the organization running. Typically, it is a handful of dedicated volunteers who take on a lot of responsibility to keep the chapter running. Those volunteers keep the organization flying, but their wings get tired and new volunteers are crucial to keeping the organization going and avoid future periods of inactivity.

There are many ways to volunteer for ASCR. No birding experience or expertise is required. Some crucial volunteer tasks include the following.

- ✎ **Organizing events** – Events could be bird walks, invasive species removals at parks, bringing in presenters to give talks or whatever you think might appeal to a bird-focused organization.
- ✎ **Contributing to the quarterly newsletter** – Contributions include writing articles, book reviews, pictures, proofreading or even formatting for those technically inclined!
- ✎ **Information tracking** – ASCR is always in need of people to help keep things organized such as membership or tracking activities for the annual report to National Audubon.
- ✎ **Monitoring email** – The ASCR email inbox gets lots of requests such as bird identification and request to host events – helping keep those requests organized and offering a first response are important.
- ✎ **Tangle-tainers** – ASCR builds and maintains tangle-tainers (for used fishing line to keep it out of the water or on the ground) and volunteers are needed to periodically empty those containers and ensure they are still standing.
- ✎ **Nest Watching** – ASCR volunteers monitor bald eagle nests and report information back to New York State for important data tracking.
- ✎ **Officer or Board Member position** – Are you ready to take the lead of the V formation? ASCR is always in need of people to take those leadership positions to ensure everything is running smoothly. The next election is February 2022.

With the current flock of volunteers having been in their positions for multiple years, new volunteers are needed to help take on some of the important work done by ASCR. Without new volunteers, the future of the organization is in question and could become extinct. No contribution to the organization is too small. If you are interested in becoming involved, please email capitalregionaudubon@gmail.com.

Nominations for Board Positions Being Accepted

ASCR is accepting nominations for the following Board positions, to be voted on at the February annual meeting (see page 3 for meeting details):

President	Treasurer
Vice President	Recording Officer
Correspondence Officer	Directors (2)

Please submit nominations to capitalregionaudubon@gmail.com by December 31, 2021. All nominations will be posted on our website and Facebook page for review and subsequent vote.

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Bird Feeder Placement: Where to Hang Bird Feeders

by Rob Ripma
Birds & Blooms Magazine, Nov. 30, 2021

While the type of feeders you select is important, proper bird feeder placement is also part of successful backyard bird feeding.

In addition to selecting the right types of bird feeders, where you place the feeders in your yard can affect how successful you are with your backyard bird feeding. In order to attract the most birds, follow these simple tips on bird feeder placement.

Measure Distance From Windows

To prevent window strikes, place bird feeders either within 3 feet of your windows or more than 10 feet away from them. You can even try a window bird feeder to see birds up close. If the birds hit your window from within 3 feet they will likely not be going fast enough to hurt themselves. If your feeders are more than 10 feet away, they birds should have time to make adjustments and avoid your windows. This won't completely stop window strikes but it should help.

Ed. note: Window decals, netting, and fishline strung 2" apart will help deter strikes and injury/death to birds.

Use a Strong Feeder Pole

If you are using a bird feeder pole or shepherd's hook to hang your feeders, be sure that it's large and sturdy enough to hold the weight of the feeders you plan to hang without bending.

Add a Baffle

Baffles stop critters from getting to your bird feeders. Birds such as the Northern cardinal may perch on the baffle before deciding which feeder to visit.

To avoid issues with chipmunks, squirrels, raccoons, and other critters, consider using a baffle. Remember, in order for a baffle to be successful, your feeders should be placed at least 10 feet from the closest object that squirrels could jump from. The top of the baffle should sit at least 4 feet off the ground.

Hang Feeders High

Be sure to hang your feeders high enough that ground predators can't jump up and catch the birds on your feeders. This bird feeder placement tip is especially important if you live in an area that has feral cats.

Learn how (and how often) to clean bird feeders. Keeping feeders clean and in good condition will lessen the transmission of avian diseases.

Plant Shrubs Nearby

Provide some nearby cover for your birds to hide should a hawk or other predator come by. Groups of small shrubs tend to be a good choice. Consider using a snag as a safe spot for birds to escape to in order to avoid predators. A snag is a clump of dead or dying trees/shrubs that has enough branches for birds to use while hiding from predators. You can use old Christmas trees (make sure to strip off all garland and ornaments) or shrubs that need to be removed (think dead invasives that no longer have fruit on them). Place the snag near enough to your feeders, and birds will happily evade hungry predators.

Bird Word

by Fred Bockis

This issue's bird word is NIDUS. One of its meanings is a nest or breeding place. In Latin it means nest. From this base we get *nidification* for 'the process of building a nest', *nidicolous* 'reared in a nest'. It's rare to come across these words, but if you do, you read it here first.

Bird of the Quarter The Shrike

by Fred Bockis

Shrikes are **carnivorous passerine birds of the family Laniidae**. The family name Lanius is derived from the Latin word for "butcher," as some shrikes are also known as butcherbirds because of their feeding habits.

These tough birds feed on rodents and smaller birds for much of the year. They spend the summer in the far north, appearing in southern Canada and the lower 48 States only in winter. Solitary and wary, they are likely to be seen perched at the top of a lone tree in an open field, watching for prey. Some shrikes in the Western US are seen dropping their prey (mice, etc.) onto a Joshua Tree which has pointed thorns, thus impaling the prey until they die. (It works.) Their name stems from this habit.

They can either pick their prey apart, bit by bit, or leave it for later. These food caches are called "pantries" or "larders," and they provide a critical source of food when prey is scarce in winter, or when the birds need extra nutrition during the summer breeding season.

They are about the size of a robin, with a dark, hooked bill, grey body, and black-and-white wings. They have prominent white wing patches that are visible in flight and a black band through the eye.



Bald Eagle Nest Watch Seeking Volunteers

by Sean Hogan

Do you love to watch birds and wildlife? Do you enjoy spending time outdoors? Are you looking for ways to volunteer that allow you to do both of those things? Then Bald Eagle Nest Watch might be for you!

In this fun and flexible program, volunteers monitor a Bald Eagle nest once a week, and submit observations to the DEC and the Eagle Watch Coordinator. This data is used by the NYS DEC to help monitor Bald Eagle nests, and nesting success rates, in this area.

With many active Bald Eagle nests in our area, we could really use more volunteers to help with monitoring. If you think you might be interested, please contact Sean Hogan, Bald Eagle Nest Watch coordinator at hogan1858@outlook.com for more information.

ASCR Annual Meeting To Be Held

The annual meeting of the Audubon Society of the Capital Region will be held on February 19, 2022, at 11:00 AM at Peebles Island State Park, 1 Delaware Avenue North, Cohoes, NY.

At this meeting, voting will take place for the Board Officers for the year. Nominations for Board positions will be accepted until December 31, and the names of nominees will be posted on the ASCR website and the Facebook page (<https://www.capitalregionaudubon.org/> and <https://www.facebook.com/theASCR/>).

Refreshments will be served, and a presentation is in the planning stages. Details for the presentation will also be posted on Facebook and the website.

The Annual Meeting is a great way to connect with other members as well as conduct the important business of electing officers and planning future programs, presentations, bird walks, and other activities for the year.

Please keep a “hawk eye” on our website and Facebook page for more information.

Good Read

Unflappable
by Suzie Gilbert



Author Suzie Gilbert channels her interest in wild birds (as documented in the memoir *Flyaway*) into a rollicking debut novel revolving around the restoration of a bald eagle to a Canadian refuge. Luna Burke's billionaire financier husband, Adam Matheson, runs a private zoo in Florida and has just stolen an eagle named Mars from a wildlife rescue center in Pennsylvania. Luna hatches a plan to take Mars and his mate—still in Pennsylvania—to Canada. What follows is a vivid primer on the world of wildlife rehabilitators and private zoos as Matheson enlists right-hand man/bodyguard Roland Edwards, a former football pro with a bum knee, to find Luna and Mars. Luna, meanwhile, calls on a naïve, reluctant rescue volunteer named Ned; her ex-Navy Seal friend, Warren, who is renowned for single-handedly saving the Florida Panther; and a slew of rehabbers to aid her and Mars on their journey. Also on her trail is Federal Wildlife Officer Erik Gunderman, who is intent on arresting Luna and returning Mars to safety. Gratuitous, clumsily written sex scenes don't do Gilbert any favors, but she does a great job describing the distinct world of her characters (“We're the poster group for people with no social skills,” Luna says), and the plot builds nail-biting suspense. Fans of *Tiger King* will find much to love. (Self-published)

-Review by [publishersweekly.com](https://www.publishersweekly.com)

Ed. note: I haven't read this book yet, but it's on my list for winter reading by the fire. I hope you get a chance to check it out, too.



New York State Birding Trail Announced

From the dec.ny.gov/animals Website

The New York State Birding Trail highlights world-class birding opportunities across the state. The trail provides information on places anyone can go to find birds amid beautiful settings. The trail is not a physically connected or built trail, but a network of promoted birding locations that can be accessed by car or public transportation and providing an inclusive experience for all.

In October 2021, New York City became the first region to be announced, with future announcements expected over the next year. This land, which was once the territory of the Lenape and Munsee nations, is now home to people from throughout the world, including descendants of those original inhabitants. Consider how indigenous people lived, and continue to live, in relationship with the natural world.

To find birding locations near you, please use the map below or this list, which contains links to site pages for more information, to find a location near you. The Google Map can also be accessed via the [Google Maps website](#) (leaves DEC website).



The New York State Birding Trail is made possible by a joint effort of many partners, including:

National Park Service - [Gateway National Recreation Area](#)
[NYC Parks](#)

[NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation](#)

[Audubon NY](#)

[NYC Audubon](#)

[National Audubon Society](#)

9 Foods You Should Never Feed to Birds

by Kelsey Roseth, *Birds & Blooms*

Can birds eat bread? Not all people foods are safe for birds. Leave these nine foods off the menu to keep your backyard birds happy and healthy.

When you see small, sweet creatures hopping along, it seems so harmless to draw them in with whatever snacks you have available. Though the urge is fierce to feed birds bread and other convenience foods, try to resist. “Malnutrition is certainly a risk if birds aren’t getting the food that they need,” says John Rowden, senior director for bird-friendly communities at Audubon. “They can be undernourished, which makes them more susceptible to disease, so it could cause health or lethal consequences.” With that knowledge, here’s a list of nine nibbles to avoid feeding your feathered friends.

Birds Should Not Eat Bread

People often ask if birds can eat bread and if bread is bad for birds. Because bread causes birds to become full quickly, fliers may skip foods with actual nutritional value. Cracked corn, pellets especially created for ducks, and regular bird seed are acceptable foods you can feed to ducks.

Raw Meat

It might seem like a good idea to set out raw meat as a winter treat, but it can go rancid and spoil—and attract unwanted guests. “As soon as you put raw meat out it starts to transform because it’s outside of a refrigerated environment,” John says.

Seeds and Nuts Sold for Humans

Sunflower seeds, nuts and legumes made for humans often have large amounts of salt. Make sure you buy bird seed or peanuts that are produced specifically for birds, leaving out the extra sodium. Or instead of shopping for bird seed, save time and money by growing native plants that produce fruit, seeds and nectar. Favorites include crabapple trees, sunflowers and salvia.

Bacon Fat

This fat is very salty, has additives and spoils easily. To make suet, get high-quality fat straight from the butcher, before it gets processed. Or, you can purchase high-quality suet cakes from nature stores or the Audubon Society.

Potato Chips

While this popular snack is often a staple at outdoor gatherings, just like when birds eat bread, it doesn’t provide proper nutrition. Keep these salty snacks for the people at your next picnic.

Honey

You’d think birds could use the calories and sugar, but honey can grow mold in addition to becoming troublesome and sticky.

Red Food Coloring

There’s no need to add any food coloring to your hummingbird sugar water. The dye is harmful and won’t attract more birds. Use a 1:3 ratio of sugar to water in your hummer feeders.

Old Birdseed

Serve fresh seed to ensure your backyard friends aren’t exposed to moldy or rancid food.

Pet Food

Dog and cat food lacks nutrition for birds and may attract mice, rats, or other backyard pests.

In the end, it all comes down to mindset. “In their hearts, people are trying to do the right thing, and what they want to do is help birds”, John says. “Great, we want to encourage that, it’s just finding the right foods.”



Get Involved!

After defining our vision, mission statement, and niche, ASCR has defined the threats to birds that we would like to focus on as well as the tools we will use to do it.

We wrote an action plan for the 2021-2024 period to define which programs we would like to implement each year regarding strategy, community engagement, funding, bird-friendly communities, climate change, birding for beginners, conservation, etc. This action plan was voted on during our December Board meeting on December 14th, 2020 and can be accessed on our website.

Our chapter is run only by volunteers. Therefore, the more volunteers we have, the more we will be able to do. You don't have to be a board member to participate. You can join us simply as a volunteer to help out with one or more programs.

Send us an email to capitalregionaudubon@gmail.com to ask about attending our board meetings, and bring a potential member.

Board Meetings Resume in January *Second Monday of every month*

In-person meetings will resume on January 10, 2022. Unless otherwise announced, we will meet at the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 510 Albany Shaker Road, Loudonville, 12211 at 6:30 PM. We welcome all who have interest in our chapter, what we do, how we do it and how you might contribute.

Contact us at: capitalregionaudubon@gmail.com for more information.

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

BIRD WALKS IN THE PLANNING STAGE FOR SPRING

ASCR is planning to offer more bird walks in the spring, based on our very successful fall walks held in October.

Winter walks are always a possibility: we won't see the variety of species we see in the spring and summer, but owls, eagles, and "winter" passerines are active.

If you are interested in attending or assisting with either winter or spring bird walks or future events, please email capitalregionaudubon@gmail.com.

GIFTS FOR BIRDERS AND NATURE LOVERS

Finding unique, personal gifts for outdoorsy types isn't always the easiest task. You may find yourself asking, "how many bird-themed coffee mugs can one person have?" The answer is: you can never have too many...but it certainly helps to have fresh ideas! That's where the Audubon Gift Guide comes in.

From binoculars and scopes to top-of-the-line hiking gear—and yes, coffee mugs—Audubon's 2021 holiday gift guide is loaded with perfect gifts for the nature lovers in your life.

From spiffy binoculars, cameras, and bird blinds, the website (<https://www.audubon.org/news/44-perfect-gifts-bird-and-nature-lovers-your-life>) provides solutions for your gift-giving dilemmas for your "birdy" friends.

ANNUAL SEED SALE PLANNING (FALL 2022)

This event is one of our largest undertakings. Teresa and Fred have been instrumental in coordinating the sale from orders to delivery for

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Get Involved!

(continued from page 5)

the last few years, but it takes a team and some serious planning to really run smoothly. If you are interested in helping set up this fall's sale, we welcome 2-4 people to be a team. Questions should be sent to capitalregionaudubon@gmail.com.

BIRD WINDOW COLLISION PROGRAM ADVOCATES

Bird-window collisions occur on average one million times a day in the USA and it is one of the top three causes of bird mortality worldwide. Our chapter delivers presentations about this problem to educate people and provide solutions to reduce the threat of their windows. We are still looking for advocates ready to deliver a presentation once or twice per year. The presentation is ready to use with slides and notes included. We train you and partner you with someone experienced! We are hoping to reach new audiences but need our volunteers!

If you are not comfortable with public speaking but feel this project speaks to you, you can help us by making window collision deterrent products available locally (contact us for details).

CLIMATE WATCH PROGRAM SURVEYORS

Audubon's Climate Watch is a new community science program that explores how North American birds are responding to climate change. We are looking at participants willing to conduct surveys for Eastern Bluebirds once annually, between May 15 to June 15. Locations include the Albany Pine Bush Preserve, Five Rivers, Vischer Ferry, Schodack Island, Troy/Cropseyville and can be completed at your leisure. We are also looking for volunteers to help coordinate the program – including recruiting and training participants, assisting volunteers in planning and conducting Climate Watch surveys, and ensuring that the data collected is submitted to the national Climate Watch team.

BIRDING FOR BEGINNERS WEBINAR (BIRDING 101)

Our chapter has set up a webinar to educate our community on the basics of birding (when and where to bird, how to use binoculars, which clues should you collect in the field to identify birds).

The presentation is ready to use with notes for each slide and we will train and partner you with somebody who has already delivered the program. We aim to offer this program two or three times in 2021 (please know we will do this as a team, you are not required to offer more than one presentation). You can also help us by reaching out to local libraries and preserves to organize the webinar without delivering the presentation yourself.

BIRDING FOR BEGINNERS (WALKS)

Depending on the COVID-19 situation, we will continue offering our birders' walks, and would like to start planning for winter and spring events. If you would like to assist us in sponsoring a bird walk, that would be great!

CONSERVATION (TANGLE TAINERS)

The ASCR has set up containers for fishermen to collect wastes from fishing to decrease instances of birds getting trapped by fishing lines. Our volunteers Eric and Fred collect the content of these containers on a regular basis. If you would like to help them for the maintenance or help set up more containers, we would love to have you!

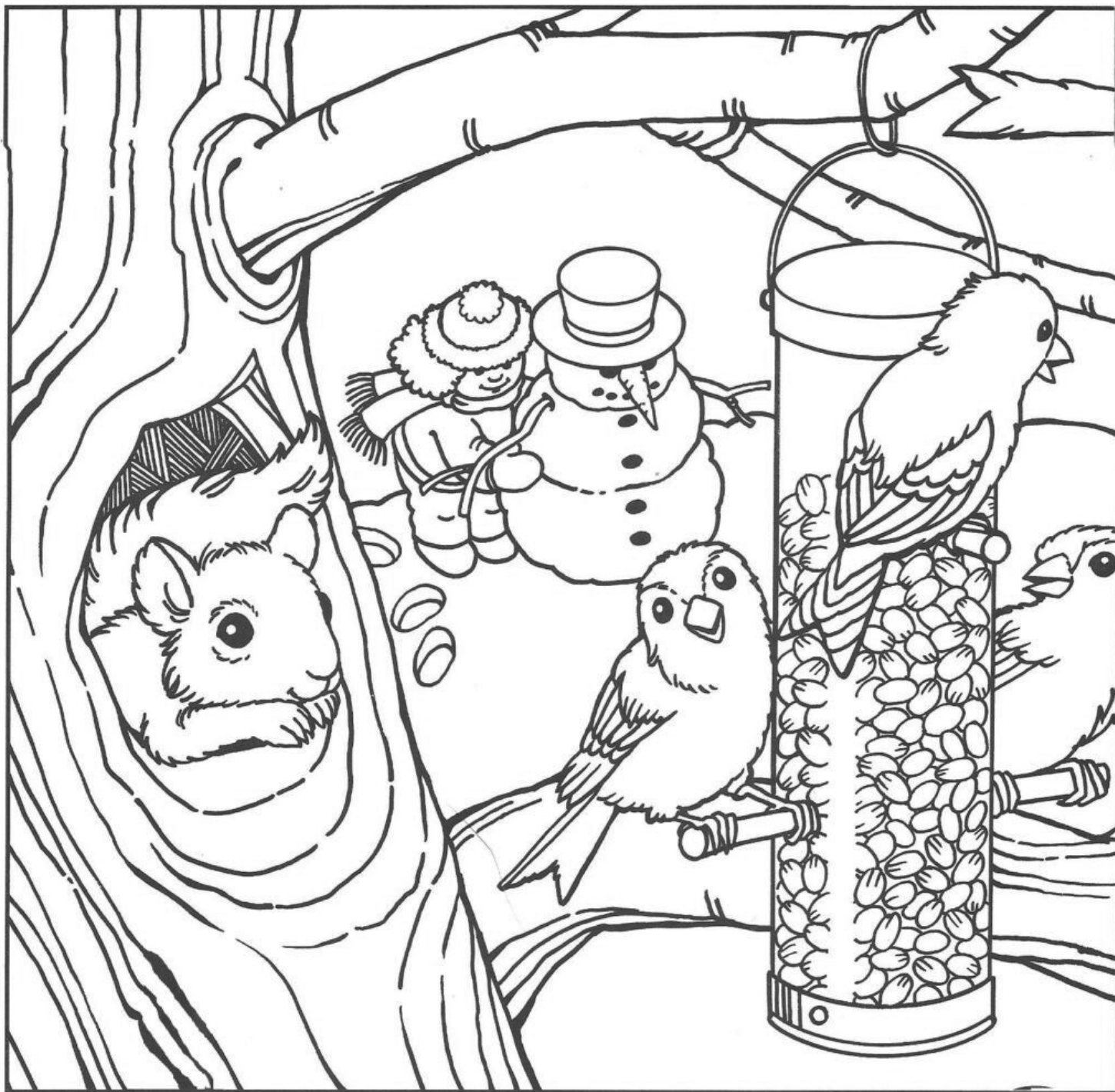
NEST BOX BUILDING

We would like to resume the nest box building program through workshops with children and families as soon as possible. No woodworking skills are needed. This position focuses on coordinating the program.

Message us at
capitalregionaudubon@gmail.com
if you're interested in learning more!



ACTIVITIES



Did You Know?

Kiwis are endangered, flightless birds that live in New Zealand. They lay the largest eggs relative to their body size of any bird in the world.



Board Members of the Audubon Society of the Capital Region

An All Volunteer Chapter Organization of the National Audubon Society

Officers

President: Teresa Murphy
Vice President: Krista Galliher
Correspondence Officer: Fred Bockis
Treasurer: René Facchetti, Krista Galliher
Recording Officer: Lindsay Homenick

Directors

Vacant
Eric Latini

WebMaster: René Facchetti
WebAdmin: Vacant
Newsletter Editor: Carol Quantock

Board Meetings are held on the second Monday of every month. We discuss upcoming events and make decisions that guide this chapter for the year.

Please join us!

Email
capitalregionaudubon@gmail.com
for more information!

**Audubon Society
of the Capital Region**
P.O. Box 14144
Albany, NY 12212-4144
www.capitalregionaudubon.org

Questions?

Email: capitalregionaudubon@gmail.com

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. 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!!