

April - June 2006



BCA Designation for Vischer Ferry?

by Craig Thompson

In his 2005 State of the State address, Governor Pataki marked Audubon's 100th anniversary by committing to add 20 new Bird Conservation Areas (BCA) across New York State before the end of his term. Modeled after Audubon's visionary Important Bird Area program, New York State's BCA program commits designated state-owned lands and waters to a comprehensive ecosystem approach to conserving birds and their habitats. It also promotes education and research opportunities related to birds and their habitats.

All of which brings to mind Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve. Audubon New York designated Vischer Ferry an Important Bird Area in its first iteration in 1998. Often touted as one of the premier birding venues in the Capital District, the Preserve is particularly important as a post-breeding concentration area for herons and egrets in August. And as an important stopover for migrating waterfowl in spring and fall, Vischer Ferry has been compared to Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge and Brigantine National Wildlife Refuge. As with any venue in the Capital Region, peak times to see migrating water-

fowl are mid-April and mid-November. Peak times for songbirds are mid-May and mid-September.

The 465 acre Preserve, located in and managed by the Town of Clifton Park, is owned by the state Thruway Authority, with adjoining acreage owned by the state. As an unquestioned birder's paradise and model of inter-governmental cooperation, Vischer Ferry, it has been suggested, should have been designated a BCA in the state's first go 'round. In addition to the impressive aforementioned attributes, over 125 bird species have been recorded at the Preserve, and many "at risk" species can be seen during migration season(s), namely American Black Duck, Pied Billed Grebe, Osprey, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Coopers Hawk, Common Nighthawk, Willow Flycatcher, Blue-winged Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Canada Warbler, and Rusty Blackbird. At risk species which have been shown to have breeding status at the Preserve include American Bittern, Least Bittern and Wood Thrush. Other species of note include Eurasian Wigeon, Prothonotary Warbler, Wood Stork and Ruff. A BCA no-brainer, you might say.

In the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps improved duck nesting and brood habitat at this site by stabilizing water fluctuation in the marsh area between the canal and the river. The site's extensive system of open water and marshes made the area ideal for waterfowl management, and in 1950s the area was leased to the state Conservation Department for establishment of a Waterfowl Management Area. Duck hunting is still allowed at the Preserve during a designated period in waterfowl season.

Continued on page 3...

In This Issue ...

2006 Programs **2**

2006 Field Trip Schedule **3**

Vischer Ferry Continued **3**

Environmental Announcements **4**

Audubon Society of the Capital Region



**Cordially Invites You To Attend Our
Year 2006 Programs & Field Trips**



Audubon Programs

All Programs To Be Held At:

*William K. Sanford
Colonie Town Library*

Thursday, April 13, 2006, 7:00-9:00 pm

Adirondack Nature

Speaker: Warren Greene

Well-known for his stunning pictorials of loons, bluebirds, hawks and owls, widely-published photographer Warren Greene is making a return visit to the Capital District to share some of his favorite candid photos of Adirondack nature. Come and enjoy this stimulating photo essay on Adirondack nature, featuring loons, owls, spruce grouse, bobcat, and the beautiful flowers and sceneries of our great north country, as seen through the sensitive eye of Warren Greene!

Thursday, May 11, 2006, 7:00-9:00 pm

America's "Natural Parks"

Speaker: Denise & Scott Stoner

From the rocky coast of Maine to Florida's Everglades, across the great plains, badlands, mountains, and deserts, to the West Coast, Alaska, and Hawaii -- America has preserved some of its greatest natural assets within the lands of its National Park Service. Come join the well-traveled naturalists Scott and Denise Stoner for an exhilarating photo tour highlighting the scenic wonders, diversity, and wildlife of America's "natural parks".

Scott Stoner is past president of both the Audubon Society of the Capital Region and the Hudson Mohawk Bird Club. Denise is a Director of the Bird Club. Together, they have explored and photographed many of America's best - and least known - national park service sites.

Refreshments will be served. As always, we encourage you to bring your friends and family. For directions or details, call Greg Rucinski at the Colonie Library at (518) 458-9274.

Thursday, June 8, 2006, 7:00-9:00 pm

Important Bird Areas: Global Currency for Local Bird Conservation

Speaker: Jillian Limer

Audubon New York's visionary Important Bird Area (IBA) Program has identified 136 sites within the state that are most important to birds. Through the "Adopt An IBA" initiative, community groups can play a vital role in protecting and promoting proper management of those sites for the long-term conservation of birds, other wildlife, and their habitats. Come learn more about the IBA program and how you can make a difference in local conservation. Jillian Limer is the Coordinator of Audubon New York's Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program, based at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in Ithaca.

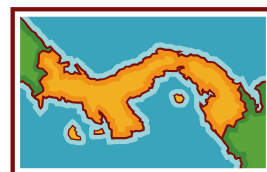
Thursday, September 14, 7:00-9:00 pm

Birding Central America

Speaker: Frank Murphy

Join ASCR board member Frank Murphy for a traveler's guide to birding in Central America. This engaging travelogue, featuring some of the most beautiful birds in the world, will focus on Frank's Central American adventures, particularly Costa Rica, Belize, and perhaps his favorite, Panama. Frank will also share tips on memorable destinations, birding economics, places to stay, and people to contact. This will be a joint program with the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club and Capital Region Audubon.

An avid birder, Frank Murphy has held various offices in both the Hudson Mohawk Bird Club and the ASCR chapter. He has traveled extensively throughout Central and South America for the express purposes of birding and wildlife observation.



Spring & Summer Audubon Field Trips

Birding Vischer Ferry

Sunday, May 21, 2006: 9:00 a.m.

Join chapter president Craig Thompson on a field survey of spring migrants at Vischer's Ferry Preserve, one of the Capital District's premier birding destinations. Suitable for the birding novice, this "citizen science" outing will kick off our chapter's "Adopt An IBA" initiative at this site. Bring binoculars. The program is free, but please call Craig Thompson at 756-3610 by Wednesday, May 17 to register and get directions. In the event of inclement weather, this program will be cancelled.

The Winged World of Dragonflies and Damselflies

Saturday, May 27, 2006: 10:00 a.m.

Location: Albany Pine Bush

Join Audubon New York staffer and ASCR Board Member Andrew Mackie for an exciting field trip into the Albany Pine Bush to survey dragonflies and damselflies. This event is part of Audubon New York's ambitious Dragonfly and Damselfly Project currently being conducted throughout New York State in cooperation with the New York Natural Heritage Program. We will be walking off trail in wet areas, so please wear appropriate clothing and shoes. Nets, field guides, and other equipment will be provided. Meet in the parking lot of the Pine Bush Discovery Center, 195 New Karner Road in Albany, NY. For more information, or to confirm in the event of inclement weather, call Andrew at 845-702-3118.

Dragonflies and Damselflies

Saturday, June 10, 2006: 2:00 p.m.

Location: Five Rivers Environmental Edu. Center

Join Audubon New York educator Larry Federman and DEC staff on a survey of dragonflies and damselflies of Five Rivers Center. This event is part of Audubon New York's ambitious Dragonfly and Damselfly Project currently being conducted throughout New York State in cooperation with the New York Natural Heritage Program. Nets, field guides, and other equipment will be provided. For more information, or to confirm in the event of inclement weather, call Five Rivers at 475-0291.

BCA Designation for Vischer Ferry?

...Continued From Page 1

Based on the site's abundant natural and cultural resources and pivotal location, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation in 1971 was seriously considering establishing an environmental education center at Vischer Ferry, before the Delmar site was chosen in 1972. The Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve was established in its own right in 1977. Today the Preserve comprises a diverse complex of forest and wetland ecosystems, approximately 60% of which represents non-tidal wetland, 25% deciduous woods, 10% riparian area, and 5 % coniferous forest. Obviously, the diversity of cover types provides excellent habitat for more than just birds: the casual visitor can expect to find turtles, frogs, deer, raccoon, fox and rabbit.

To better understand bird use at the Preserve and to verify that the Preserve continues to meet Audubon's stringent IBA criteria, more inventories and monitoring, particularly of at-risk species and wading birds, are needed. Our chapter Board would like to lead an "Adopt An IBA" initiative at the Preserve to help meet these objectives, and to monitor management activities which might have an affect on bird conservation.

As a kick-off to our chapter's "adoption" initiative, ASCR members are cordially invited to a birding field trip at the Preserve on Sunday, May 21 (see schedule for details). Whether IBA or BCA, Vischer Ferry is an ornithological treasury with many rewards, and deserves our vigilance. Information on the BCA program can be found on the BCA website at <http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dfwmr/wildlife/bca/index.html>



OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

President: Craig Thompson
508B Stanton Road
Coeymans Hollow, NY 12046
(518) 756-3610 (home)
President@CapitalRegionAudubon.org

Vice: Graham Cox
President: 200 Trillium Lane
Albany, NY 12203
(518) 869-9731 (work)
gcox@audubon.org

Secretary: David Gibson
107 Longkill Road
Ballston Lake, NY 12019
(518) 877-8678 (home)
(518) 377-1452 (work)

Treasurer: Louise Desormeau
P.O. Box 11654
Albany, NY 12211
(518) 786-0805 (home)
auntlouisd@aol.com

DIRECTORS

Sue Adair 107 Fox Run Drive Schenectady, NY 12303 (518) 355-8008 (home) adair@nycap.rr.com	René Facchetti 1392 Delaware Turnpike Delmar, NY 12054 (518) 768-4630 (home) ryf@nycap.rr.com
Andrew Mackie 159 Schoolhouse Road Albany, NY 12203 (518) 869-9731 (work) amackie@audubon.org	Frank Murphy 7 Finch Court Rensselaer, NY 12144 (518) 577-8005 thrush@nycap.rr.com
Jane Graves PO Box 494 Slingerlands, NY 12159 jgraves@skidmore.edu	Erin Willsey 182 Stage Road Box 290B East Berne, NY 12059

COMMITTEES

Conservation: David Gibson
(518) 877-8678 (home)

Education: Erin Willsey

Programs: Scott Stoner—Co Chair
(518) 785-6760 (home)
scottjstoner@aol.com

Field Trips: Craig Thompson
(518) 756-3610 (home)

Membership: Louise Desormeau
(518) 786-0805 (home)

Publicity: Open

Editor of Wingbeats / Webmaster: René Facchetti
(518) 768-4630 (home)
ryf@nycap.rr.com



Environmental Announcements

New York State Ornithological Association 2006 Meeting

The 59th Annual Meeting will be hosted by the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society during the weekend of September 29 - October 1, 2006 at the Morris Hall Conference Center of SUNY at Oneonta, NY. Save these dates to experience the Catskill Mountains in fall, including the Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch and Otsego Lake, James Fenimore Cooper's *Glimmerglass*. For more information go to the NYSOA website at www.nybirds.org

2006 New York State Bluebird Society Conference

The New York State Bluebird Society will hold its spring meeting at the Beaver Meadow Audubon Society in North Java, NY on Saturday, May 6. For more information, log on to www.nysbs.org

Northeast Natural History Conference

The Northeast Natural History Conference will be held at the Empire State Plaza Convention Center in Albany, NY on April 20-21, 2006. The conference is a forum for researchers to present current information on the varied aspects of natural history for the Northeastern United States and adjacent Canada. The Northeast Natural History Conference serves as a forum to identify research needs, foster friendships, and rekindle interest in natural. The program includes a keynote speaker, paper and poster sessions, an illustrator's gallery, book market and a banquet. Go to www.nysm.gov or call 474-5811.

***** For Programs, Field Trip, & Further General
Environmental Information, Visit Us on the Internet at:
www.CapitalRegionAudubon.Org**



**Audubon Society
of the Capital Region, Inc.
P.O. Box 11654
Albany, NY 12211**

☒ **Return Service Requested**

**DATED PROGRAM
PLEASE EXPEDITE**

Printed on Recycled Paper



Pre-Sort Std.
US Postage
Paid
Albany, NY
Permit # 881