



AUTUMN 2023

WINGBEATS

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

ANNUAL BIRD SEED SALE RECAP

The annual bird seed sale, which began on September 1, 2023, is one of our largest undertakings. This year, gross sales amounted to \$1,400, which is the highest amount in the history of the sale. A crew of seven ASCR members: Teresa Murphy, Carol and Paul Quantock, Eric Latini, Douglas and Margie Rogers, and Sheryl Collins worked at the Colonie Library to greet customers. They also separated orders by customer and loaded the bags and boxes into cars, which enabled customers to be on their way quickly on a lovely Saturday morning.

As was the case last year, there were some changes in the products offered. We've expanded the product line to include mealworms, safflower hearts, and sunflower hearts. These products sold very well and will be included in future sales.

We are looking into the possibility of changing the pickup location in 2024, and we will make sure that all information is published as soon as possible on our website, in Wingbeats, and on our Facebook page.

Thank you to all who supported the sale this year.

American Ornithological Society Commits

To Renaming Birds

(from AOS website)

For several years, the AOS community has engaged in a conversation about eponymous English bird names through a variety of activities and forums.

On November 1, 2023, the AOS Council announced three commitments concerning eponymous English bird names:

- ◆ The AOS commits to changing all English-language names of birds within its geographic jurisdiction that are named directly after people (eponyms), along with other names deemed offensive and exclusionary, focusing first on those species that occur primarily within the U.S. or Canada.
- ◆ The AOS commits to establishing a new committee to oversee the assignment of all English common names for species within the AOS's jurisdiction; this committee will broaden participation by including a diverse representation of individuals with expertise in the social sciences, communications, ornithology, and taxonomy.
- ◆ The AOS commits to actively involving the public in the process of selecting new English bird names.

Read the full AOS Council statement announcing these commitments and Council's rationale at <https://americanornithology.org/about/english-bird-names-project/american-ornithological-society-council-statement-on-english-bird-names/>

Council's commitments came in response to the final report and recommendations submitted by the AOS Ad Hoc English Bird Names Committee. All AOS members and other interested parties are encouraged to read the committee's final report.

AOS President Colleen Handel, Ph.D., said: "There is power in a name, and some English bird names have associations with the past that continue to be exclusionary and harmful today. We need a much more inclusive and engaging scientific process that focuses attention on the unique features and beauty of the birds themselves. Everyone who loves and cares about birds should be able to enjoy and study them freely—and birds need our help now more than ever."

AOS Executive Director and CEO Judith Scarl, Ph.D., said: "As scientists, we work to eliminate bias in science. But there has been historic bias in how birds are named, and who might have a bird named in their honor. Exclusionary naming conventions developed in the 1800s, clouded by racism and misogyny, don't work for us today, and the time has come for us to transform this process and redirect the focus to the birds, where it belongs. I am proud to be part of this new vision and am excited to work in partnership with a broad array of experts and bird lovers in creating an inclusive naming structure."

IN THIS ISSUE...

Seed Sale Recap, Renaming Birds.....	1
Notes, Upcoming Events.....	2
Turkey Comeback.....	3
Spotted Lanternfly.....	4
Photo Gallery.....	5
Poster Contest, Project FeederWatch.....	6
Activities.....	7
Chapter Leadership Information.....	8



NOTES FROM THE BACK WINDOW

by Carol Quantock

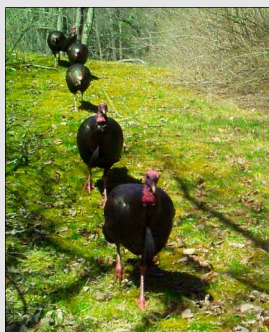
One of the nicest things about planting the large native plant and shrub area in the back of the house is the ability to observe nature in ways I never anticipated. We've had trail cameras (aka "crittercams") on the property for several years and we've captured some great shots of the fauna that frequent the periphery, but being able to just look out and spot something unusual is pretty exciting, too.

By far the most spectacular sights were the Great Horned Owls that started a family in a tree that we could see right from one of the house windows. This vantage point allowed us to observe without disturbing the female owl sitting on the nest. She would fly off if she detected human movement outside, and since the winter was upon us, we stayed inside so the eggs wouldn't be compromised. We were able to see two little downy heads, then bigger fluffy heads, and finally the owlets were out on the tree branch, looking at their kingdom. Once they fledged, there were no more owls in that nest, and it has since blown down due to storms.

Looking out also has rewarded us with seeing a red fox going about its business pretty close to the house, our neighbor's indoor/outdoor cat looking for mice and voles near the back deck, and the local Cooper's Hawk barreling in after hapless Mourning Doves or other passerine birds. Opossums cross the yard at night as well as rabbits and raccoons. We've yet to see a coyote close to the house, but I have no doubt that they've trotted through. Deer are "regulars", but rarely do they venture too close; they prefer to hang back near the heavier vegetation and woods.

Now that the growing season is over and the seed heads in the garden are bursting, we've seen a delightful assortment of Chickadees, Carolina Wrens, White-throated Sparrows, Cardinals, Tufted Titmice, Dark-eyed Juncos, Downy Woodpeckers, Goldfinches, and White-breasted Nuthatches gleaning seeds. They take advantage of the natural menu items until we supplement by putting up the feeders at the end of November. The birds will spread the native seeds to other areas and continue the lifecycle.

I'll continue to observe the backyard view and report any news in future editions of Wingbeats. For now, enjoy a couple of photos we've taken during our time here.



Turkey parade, left, and fisher, right

Upcoming Events and Programs

Below is a list of various events and programs from ASCR and other like-minded organizations, along with information on how to register or attend.

Audubon Society

- ◆ November 13, 6:30 PM — Monthly meeting of the Audubon Society of the Capital Region. This meeting will be held via Zoom; email capitalregionaudubon@gmail.com if you would like to attend and you will be sent the link.
- ◆ Bill Combs, the Eagle Man, will be presenting a spectacular PowerPoint slide show that covers his adventures tracking down and photographing eagles in the area. This event will be held at an ASCR monthly meeting sometime in early 2024. Date, time, and location TBA, and will be announced on Facebook and the ASCR website.
- ◆ February 12, 2024 — Monthly Meeting of the Audubon Society of the Capital Region. Location, time, and date are TBA, and will be announced on Facebook and the ASCR website.
- ◆ April 2024 — Annual Meeting of the Audubon Society of the Capital Region. Location, time, and date are TBA, and will be announced on Facebook and the ASCR website.

Wild Ones Capital Region NY

- ◆ November 11 — 3rd Annual Native Plant Celebration & Seed Swap, 11:00 AM-2:00 PM, Thacher Park Visitor Center, 830 Thacher Park Road, Voorheesville.
- ◆ November 16 — "The Gardener's Guide to Prairie Plants" with Neil Diboll and Hilary Cox, 6:00 PM-7:00 PM, online/virtual, free admission, registration required.
- ◆ November 25 — Meet & Hike, 9:00 AM-10:00 AM, Farm Path and Overlook Scenic Hudson's Long View Park 1.2 mi, 1886 River Road, Coxsackie, NY, 12192, free event, public welcome.
- ◆ December 16 — Annual Meeting & Member Appreciation, 1:30 PM-3:30 PM, Westbrook Room @ Guilderland Library, 2228 Western Avenue, Guilderland, NY, 12084, free event, public welcome.
- ◆ December 30 — Meet & Hike, 9:00 AM-10:00 AM, Albany Pine Bush Blue Trail, 195 New Karner Road, Albany, NY, 12205, free event, public welcome.

Visit Wild Ones at <https://capitalregionny.wildones.org/> for more information.

How Wild Turkeys Made a 49 State Comeback

(Excerpted from the Audubon New York Website)

While turkeys are now common across rural landscapes, that wasn't always the case. Let's take a closer look at this interesting game species' conservation story, and learn how to help turkeys continue to thrive.

TURKEY TALK

Most of us are familiar with Wild Turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*) and can easily identify them – large, heavy birds (goose-sized), with a long neck, bare head, and long legs. Their red wattle (loose, bumpy skin hanging from their neck) is more distinctive in male or “tom” turkeys. Toms can fan their tail feathers and fluff up their chests in an impressive breeding display. They're known for their famous vocalization – the “gobble.” Despite their heavy body mass, turkeys can fly short distances and will even roost in trees.

Turkeys' preferred habitat is mature forest with an open canopy, adjacent to fields and other openings. In the northeast, they seek out forests comprised of nut trees, like oaks, hickories, and beech, as well as soft mast species like cherry. Turkeys forage for seeds and nuts on the forest floor, and will eat plants and insects occasionally. They build their nests on the ground, usually in the forest at the base of a tree, but can be placed in tall grass or under a shrub.

A CONSERVATION SUCCESS STORY

Prior to the 1960s, Wild Turkeys were not as widespread throughout the U.S. They inhabited fewer states and were not found in the western part of the country. In the northeast, turkeys occupied only the southern portions of New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. Turkeys were a valuable food source for Native Americans, who first domesticated the birds, and early European colonists also hunted turkeys for their meat.

Populations were abundant until the mid-1800s, when European colonists cleared forestland for agriculture, development, and railroad construction. The rapid loss of forest habitat coupled with unregulated hunting led to steep declines, and turkey populations plummeted to their lowest by the 1930s and 40s. Some estimates suggest that turkeys declined across their range by 90%, even vanishing from many states they had previously occupied, including Vermont and New York.

Several state wildlife agencies made the first attempts at restoring turkey populations. In their favor, turkey habitat was increasing due to the abandonment of farms during the Great Depression and the subsequent regrowth of forests. It took several decades of trying various restoration techniques, but finally in the 1950s, wildlife biologists utilized cannon nets to capture Wild Turkeys and relocate them to areas they once populated. These new restoration attempts were very successful and this method of capturing and relocating Wild Turkeys was quickly replicated throughout the U.S.

By the 1970s, Wild Turkey populations had increased dramatically, so much so that hunting resumed in some areas. Strict hunting regulations also helped the population rebound. Their range now expands well beyond the historic range - Wild Turkeys now occupy 49 states (all but Alaska), parts of Mexico, and southern Canada. Their conservation success story is due to a massive cooperative conservation effort to restore their population. The National Wild Turkey Federation was organized in the 1970s to drive education, policy, and funding that will ensure the continued conservation of Wild Turkeys.

TIPS TO CREATE TURKEY HABITAT

If you're inspired by the conservation success story of Wild Turkeys and want to see and support these delightful birds on your land, Audubon can help! We work with landowners and land managers, on projects like Woods, Wildlife, and Warblers, to provide management guidance to create or maintain important habitat for many birds, including Wild Turkey.

By creating open canopies within mature forests, and planting nut and berry-producing trees, you will also benefit many other forest birds (game and non-game species) that use similar habitat, like American Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse, Cerulean Warbler, Downy, Pileated, and Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Indigo Bunting, White-breasted Nuthatch, Blue Jay, and many more. Many mammal species use turkey habitat, too, including deer, bear, hare, squirrels, and more.

If you don't own much land but live near a forest, you can support local Wild Turkeys by planting the same nut and berry-producing trees, like oaks and cherries, in your yard (be sure to plant native species to provide the most nutritious food sources! Check out Audubon's Plants for Birds directory to find native species that will grow well in your region).

Wild Turkeys are a beloved, well-recognized, and frequently observed species. And, creating and conserving their habitat is a great practice that helps many birds and other wildlife.

Interested in learning more about Wild Turkeys? Visit Audubon's Guide to North American Birds.

Sources of information:

Audubon Guide to North American Birds

National Wild Turkey Federation

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, All About Birds

November Invasive Species News - Check for Spotted Lanternfly Egg Masses

(reprinted from the NYSDEC website)

Fall is a great time to check for spotted lanternflies (SLF)! You may find some adult lanternflies lingering until the first hard frost, as well as their freshly laid egg masses that will overwinter and bring next year's generation of lanternflies.

Spotted lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*) or SLF, is an invasive insect pest from Asia that primarily feeds on trees of heaven (*Alnus altissima*) but can also feed on a wide variety of plants such as grapevine, hops, maple, walnut, and fruit trees. While the full impacts of SLF are unknown, the insect will negatively impact the agricultural and tourism industries and may impact New York's forests.

You can help protect our natural resources by checking for SLF in your area, joining the statewide network of scientists and volunteers tracking the spread of this invasive species. We encourage you to get outside, check for spotted lanternflies, and report back to [iMapInvasives](https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/113303.html), an online invasive species database. Your report is valuable, whether you found SLF or not!

Good places to check for SLF egg masses:

- ◆ Flat man-made surfaces and their undersides (metal barrels, vehicles, fences).
- ◆ Tree trunks and branches.

Learn more about where to survey and how to record your efforts by visiting the NYSDEC website, <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/113303.html>.

In the US, SLF was first discovered in Pennsylvania in 2014 and was found in New York in 2020.

The first New York State infestation was discovered in Staten Island in August 2020.



Above: SLF egg masses on a tree, Photo: Kenneth R. Law, USDA APHIS PPQ, bugwood.org

Description

Nymphs, or newly hatched SLF, are black with white spots and turn red before transitioning into adults. The black nymphs can be seen as early as April and until July. Red nymphs can be seen from July until September.

Adults begin to appear in July and are approximately 1 inch long and ½ inch wide at rest, with eye-catching wings. Their forewings are grayish with black spots. The lower portions of their hindwings are red with black spots and the upper portions are dark with a white stripe.

In the fall, adults lay 1-inch-long egg masses on nearly anything from tree trunks and rocks to vehicles and firewood. They are smooth and brownish-gray with a shiny, waxy coating when first laid.

Signs of an Infestation

Sap oozing or weeping from tiny open wounds on tree trunks, which appears wet and may give off fermented odors.

One-inch-long egg masses that are brownish-gray, waxy and mud-like when new. Old egg masses are brown and scaly.

SLF excrete liquid waste called honeydew that builds up under plants, sometimes encouraging the growth of black sooty mold.

Impacts

SLF pose a significant threat to New York's agricultural industry, negatively impacts outdoor recreation, and may impact forest health.

Adults and nymphs use their sucking mouthparts to feed on the sap of more than 70 plant species.

This feeding, sometimes by thousands of SLF, stressed plants, making them vulnerable to disease and attacks from other insects.

SLF also excrete large amounts of sticky "honeydew", which promotes the growth of sooty molds that interfere with plant photosynthesis, negatively affecting the growth and fruit yield of plants; attracts swarms of insects that hinder outdoor activities; and results in people getting honeydew on their hair, clothes, and other belongings when going outside.

New York's annual yield of apples and grapes has a combined value of more than \$350 million, which could be greatly impacted by SLF. The full extent of economic damage this insect could cause is unknown at this time.

Spread

SLF spread primarily through human activity. They lay their eggs on vehicles, firewood, outdoor furniture, stone, and which are inadvertently transported to new areas, causing the insect to spread.

Management

A plan has been developed that describes how the agencies will detect and prevent further spread of SLF in New York. Extensive trapping surveys are being conducted in high-risk areas throughout the state as well as inspections of nursery stock, stone shipments, commercial transports, etc. DEC and partner organizations encourage everyone to be on the lookout for this pest.



Photos: Lawrence Barringer, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, bugwood.org

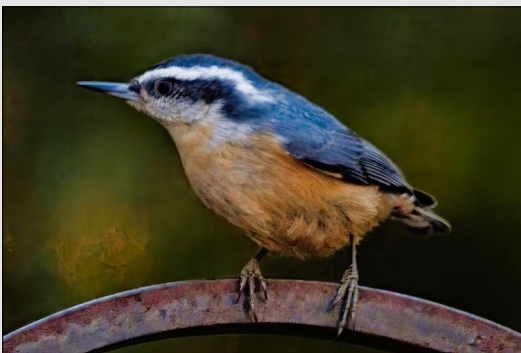
Photo Gallery



From left: Carol Quantock, Sheryl Collins, and Teresa Murphy at the Thatcher Park Hawk Watch on September 9



Douglas Rogers, representing ASCR at the Buddy Walk on September 24, Central Park, Schenectady



From left: Teresa Murphy, Eric Latini, Paul Quantock, Carol Quantock, Sheryl Collins, and Douglas Rogers taking a break at the Bird Seed Sale on October 28



*From top: Red-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Red-bellied Woodpecker;
Right: Northern Cardinal, male and Northern Cardinal, female
Photos courtesy of Gerald Woulfin*

DEC Announces 'Create a Watershed Superhero' Poster Contest for Middle School Students

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos and the New York Water Environment Association (NYWEA) today announced the annual "Create a Watershed Superhero" poster contest for middle school students. The Create a Watershed Superhero poster theme challenges middle school students to create their own superhero to inspire environmental stewardship.

"New York is making sustained and historic investments in water quality, helping clean waterways and restore habitats across the state," Commissioner Seggos said. "To help grow New York's next generation of environmental stewards, DEC's annual 'Create a Watershed Superhero' poster contest encourages young people to become guardians of their watersheds and reminds all New Yorkers of the everyday actions everyone can take to protect and conserve water."

"NYWEA is proud to take part in this poster contest with the DEC every year, and even more proud of all of the Watershed Superheroes we now have because of the involvement of the students and teachers who participated in past years," said Khris Dodson, NYWEA's executive director.

Since 2004, the annual poster contest has encouraged thousands of middle school students across New York State to learn about their role in protecting their local watersheds and how to conserve and safeguard water resources, now and for future generations. This is the third year of the superhero poster contest theme. Previous themes include "We All Live in a Watershed," "Conserve and Protect our Watersheds," and "The Importance of Wastewater Treatment." To participate in the 2023-24 school year contest, New York State teachers, schools, and clubs are advised to visit DEC's website for more information.

Posters will be accepted through Jan. 12, 2024. The 14 winning posters will be featured in DEC and NYWEA's 2025 Annual Calendar.

The poster contest helps raise community awareness of the importance of natural resources and the DEC programs that help manage sources of water pollution and improve water quality. Many lakes and rivers are managed through watershed programs that plan and initiate activities to protect and restore water quality. DEC funds projects to conserve water and protect water quality through statewide grant funding opportunities through the Water Quality Improvement Program and upcoming Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act funding.

Use [DECinfo Locator](#) to see if an area is covered by a Clean Watershed Plan under the Environmental Monitoring layer category. To learn more about positive actions New Yorkers can take to protect New York's waters visit DEC's [Keep Water Clean and Water Quality Management](#) pages for more information.

Get Involved—Participate in Project FeederWatch

Project FeederWatch turns your love of feeding birds into scientific discoveries. FeederWatch is a November-April survey of birds that visit backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America. You don't even need a feeder! All you need is an area with plantings, habitat, water, or food that attracts birds. The schedule is completely flexible. Count your birds for as long as you like on days of your choosing, then enter your counts online. Your counts allow you to track what is happening to birds around your home and to contribute to a continental data-set of bird distribution and abundance. FeederWatch data show which bird species visit feeders at thousands of locations across the continent every winter. The data also indicate how many individuals of each species are seen. This information can be used to measure changes in the winter ranges and abundances of bird species over time.

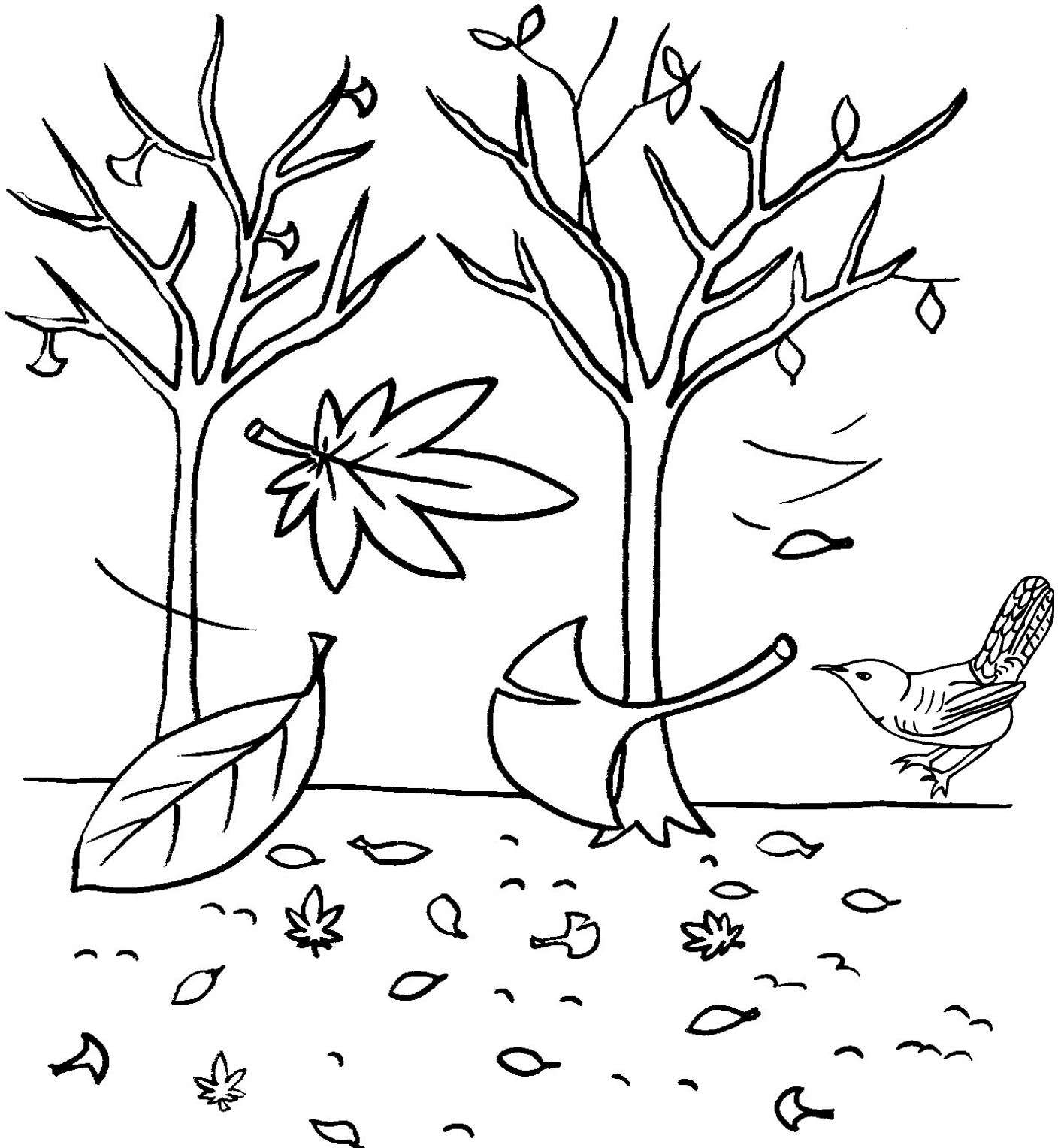
What sets FeederWatch apart from other monitoring programs is the detailed picture that FeederWatch data provide about weekly changes in bird distribution and abundance across the United States and Canada. Importantly, FeederWatch data tell us where birds are as well as where they are not. This crucial information enables scientists to piece together the most accurate population maps.

Because FeederWatchers count the number of individuals of each species they see several times throughout the winter, FeederWatch data are extremely powerful for detecting and explaining gradual changes in the wintering ranges of many species. In short, FeederWatch data are important because they provide information about bird population biology that cannot be detected by any other available method.

Project FeederWatch data are used to document and understand the distribution and abundance of birds that visit feeders in North America.

Project FeederWatch is operated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Birds Canada. For more information and details on how to join, go to <https://feederwatch.org/about/project-overview/#what-is-feederwatch>.

Activities Page





Audubon Society of the Capital Region

P.O. Box 38177

Albany, NY 12203-8177

www.capitalregionaudubon.org

**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: Carol Quantock

Correspondence Officer: Sheryl Collins

Treasurer: René Facchetti

Recording Officer: Margie Rogers

Program Chair: Vacant

Directors

Eric Latini

René Fachetti

Webmaster: René Fachetti

WebAdmin: Vacant

Newsletter Editor: Carol Quantock

**Board Meetings are held on the second
Monday of every month. We discuss up-
coming events and make decisions that
guide the chapter for the year.**

Email

capitalregionaudubon@gmail.com

for more information

**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. There are four Chapter Supporter memberships available:

Individual: \$20.00

Student: \$15.00

Couple (two persons residing in same home): \$35.00

**Family (three or more adults/children residing in same home):
\$50.00**

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!!



Questions?

Email: capitalregionaudubon@gmail.com