

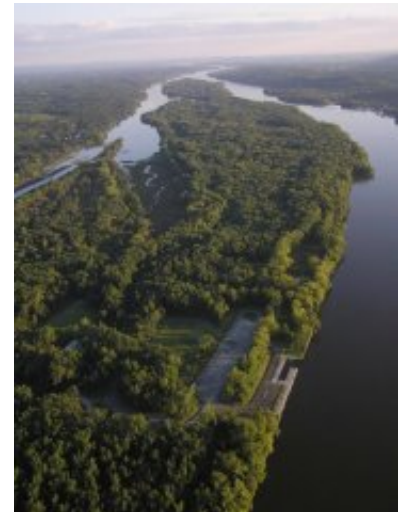


WINGBEATS

During the past year we have accomplished so much! We sponsored nine talks, seven outings and two major family days. We tabled at six events, received three grants, and had one major mailing of our newsletter. In addition to this, we piloted Audubon NY's "For the Birds!" elementary school program to two classes of 4th graders in Troy and placed four class sets of National Audubon's "Audubon Adventures" in local schools. Our board members have attended council meetings and leadership camp. We sponsored the 2011 Christmas Bird Count and conducted bird monitoring at Schodack Island State Park and Thacher State Park.

Now, we need YOU to move forward! First, we need your involvement and input. This newsletter contains a schedule of events for the upcoming months. Join us! We want to meet you and get to know you!

Thanks to a TogetherGreen grant, we are sponsoring a hands-on conservation day for volunteers at **Schodack Island State Park, Saturday, September 29th**, from 9 am to 4 pm. We'll be cutting invasive oriental bittersweet vines that are 3" and greater in diameter. These vines threaten the habitats of cerulean warblers (whose numbers have declined by 70% since the 1960's) and bald eagles. See the chapter website: <http://www.capitalregionaudubon.org> for details. Come for all or part of the day!



Second, we need your financial support to do more. We want to assure that "**For the Birds!**" continues in our area to expose and delight under-served inner-city children to the wonders of nature using birds as a conduit. **Please consider sponsoring a child at the cost of \$10**, which covers the cost of individual materials for that child to use during the course of a 6-week program and to take home at the end. Each class of students costs about \$250. We would like to raise at least \$1500 to cover the cost of continuing this program at School 2 in Troy (three classes of 4th graders) and to extend the program to one other elementary school. "For the Birds!" is run by volunteers and our chapter is also entirely run by volunteers. *Send your*

contribution to ASCR, PO Box 14135, Albany, NY 12212-4135. Make checks payable to ASCR. If you are interested in getting involved by volunteering your time, please contact: Lois Gundrum at lgundrum1@nycap.rr.com. or Larry Deyss at ladeyss@gmail.com.

Monk Parakeets in Watervliet by Amy Sternstein

This past June, two Monk Parakeets built a nest on a power pole beneath three transformers at the intersection of 3rd Avenue and 21st Street in Watervliet, N.Y. The Monk Parakeet, also known as the Quaker Parrot, is native to the temperate to subtropical areas of South America. However, they have long been settled in areas



around New York City and Connecticut. In the 1960's, they were very popular as pets. Feral colonies resulted from escaped and released pet birds. DEC officials believe the Watervliet parakeets might have moved up from downstate. Monk Parakeets are highly intelligent, social birds. They lay 5-12 eggs, which hatch in 24 days. The Monk Parakeet is the only parrot that builds a stick nest, in a tree or on a man-made structure, rather than using a tree cavity. In northern areas, they purposely choose power and light poles as nesting sites because of the heat that's given off. After the chicks fledge, the adults will use the nest all winter in which to roost and stay warm. Because the nest was growing so large - the elaborate twig structure was a few feet tall

and wide – there was concern that a fire might break out in one of the transformers. Much to the dismay of the neighbors who enjoyed watching the birds, the nest was dismantled. DEC said no eggs had been laid yet. One parakeet was captured and taken to Berkshire Bird Paradise in Petersburg where it is residing with a pair of monk parakeets previously captured in Menands. People say you can still see the other Watervliet bird flying around the area on occasion. A wonderful video of the birds building their nest can be found at:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZzkmSD_qtVQ. (Photo by Times Union, in article by Jason Wang)

Up Close with Red-Tailed Hawk Chicks by Amy Sternstein

Some families in Guilderland had the thrill of a lifetime this past spring. They were treated to an up-close view of a baby red-tailed hawk who had fallen or was pushed out of its nest and landed on the ground in the backyard of Dodi and Gary Davidson. They and their neighbors, Deb and Don Rhoades, contacted ASCR because they were worried about the chick. They were advised to leave it alone, as it was obvious that the parents were providing food for it. The chick found a sheltered area at the edge of the woods and stayed there for a few days. As it grew, it started taking strolls around the area. For 3-4 weeks, the baby hawk explored the two backyards by foot, because it was still too young to fly. Don Rhoades was worried that the parent hawks might be stressed, so he played music by Vivaldi through outdoor speakers to soothe them. Eventually the chick was able to fly short distances. That's when the second baby hawk made itself known. They roosted together on branches, power lines, and even on the Rhoades' arbor, waiting for the parents to feed them. The parents fed their offspring well, and the chicks grew rapidly. Eventually, they started to venture farther, exploring the rest of the neighborhood. For almost 4 months, they thrilled the neighbors, allowing people to come quite close to observe them and photograph them. The parents, however, always kept their distance, and would only bring food to the chicks when people were far enough away. By the end of July, the chicks were grown and on their own. They left the area to find new territory. As Deb Rhoades said, it was so exciting to watch them grow up and she misses them now that they're gone. But at least she had a chance to see something that most people never will: baby red-tailed hawks growing up right in her own backyard! (Photo by Deb Rhoades; see ASCR Facebook page for more photos).



Hog Island Experience by John Loz

During the last week of August 2012, three ASCR Board Members attended Hog Island Leadership Camp in Maine with other chapter leaders from the Audubon Atlantic Flyway. Attendees came from all over – North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Florida, Vermont and even a rep from Tulsa, Oklahoma (well, once in a while even birds get a little off course!). We worked together to share our local programs and develop ideas to connect chapters in projects that protect birds common to different states. Hog Island was a wonderful adventure – ranging from working breakout groups and talks designed to enlighten chapters on how to plan bird friendly communities through habitat restoration and preservation projects, to fun inter-tidal zone and off-shore excursions. I highly recommend the many fun, educational and worthwhile programs of Hog Island to you. Check out excursions and programs to enjoy next summer – you won't regret it! For more information, go to <http://www.projectpuffin.org/ornithcamps.html> (Photo by Lois Gundrum)



Upcoming Events

September 22, 8 am - 10:30 am Bird walk at Saratoga National Historic Park w/ local wildlife artist and birder, Jocelyn Cole. We hope to see late migrating warblers and grassland birds. Meet in the parking lot near the Visitors Center off of SR 32.

September 29, 9 am - 4 pm TogetherGreen Volunteer Day at Schodack Island State Park. Cut invasive oriental bittersweet vines. Wear long sleeves, pants, bug repellent. Bring handsaw and GPS (if you have them). We will provide lunch, snacks, drinks. Meet at entrance to park. An opportunity to give back!

October 21 (details to follow) Bird walk at Vischer Ferry with John Hershey

October 30, 7 pm - 8 pm Dr. Jeff Herter, NYS Office of Coastal Resources, "Development Pressures, Ecological Habitats and Bird Flyways along the coast of NY revealed by offshore spatial planning GIS Techniques." Colonie Public Library

November 17, 11 am - 4 pm Raptor Rapture! at the NYS Museum. A full day of bird talks, live birds of prey, displays, and exhibits. Join us and explore the world of birds! See ASCR website for schedule of talks. <http://www.capitalregionaudubon.org> This event is co-sponsored by ASCR, Friends of the Washington County Grasslands IBA, and the New York State Museum.

December 8, 4 pm - 7 pm Night Owls and Hot Dogs at Five Rivers Environmental Education Center. An informative foray into the woods to listen for owls, followed by tasty hot dogs and hot drinks in front of a campfire. Co-sponsored by Five Rivers and ASCR.

For the Birds!



ASCR ANNUAL APPEAL 2012

PLEASE HELP SUPPORT THIS CAUSE

Help us to bring 'For the Birds!' to the Capital Region

'For the Birds!' is an elementary education program that was developed by Audubon NY. It is designed to enrich the lives of inner city elementary school children by giving them a connection to nature through the study of birds.



This past spring, the Audubon Society of the Capital Region piloted Audubon NY's "For the Birds!" elementary school program at School 2 in Troy, NY. ASCR Board Member Larry Deyss, volunteer Carole Akots, and ASCR President Lois Gundrum led the 6-week

program for two 4th grade classes. Each class participated in a one-hour themed program, once a week, culminating with a field trip to Five Rivers Environmental Education Center. Themes included bird ID, a neighborhood birdwalk, migration, beak adaptations, and a live bird of prey program. Each day, there was an interactive presentation of the topic, a related hands-on game, and a time for drawing and journaling.

The students, teachers, and ASCR volunteers were extremely enthusiastic about this program. We, as a chapter, are hoping to expand this offering in the Capital Region, targeting schools that are located in the hearts of Troy, Albany, Schenectady, and surrounding cities. Many of these children have limited

opportunities to experience nature. It is a delight to see them notice their mostly concrete environs in a different way. On our neighborhood walks, we not only saw pigeons, house sparrows, blue jays and crows; but also downy woodpeckers, a cedar wax-wing, a song sparrow, and a great blue heron flying overhead! Who would have guessed?!

We intend to continue this program at School 2 for three 4th grade classes during the Spring of 2013. We would love to expand to another school in Troy and, eventually, to another school district. For this we need financial support and volunteers. Please consider supporting one or more



students at \$10/student materials cost and/or donate your time as a classroom volunteer. For further information, call Lois Gundrum, 518-598-3025, lgundrum1@nycap.rr.com. (Photos by Lois Gundrum)

TO SUPPORT THIS PROGRAM, SEND IN THE FORM ON PAGE 8. MANY THANKS!



Find that Bird! by Amy Sternstein

The object of this word puzzle is to try to find the name of a bird hidden in each sentence. If you get stuck, clues are given after the sentences. Answers can be found on page 7.

Here is an example: In the movie, the hero binds up the villain with rope.

Clue: We usually think of spring when this migrating bird arrives.

Answer: In the movie, the hero binds up the villain with rope. (robin)

Think you're ready? Now you try it!

- (1) I lost my credit card in Alaska.
- (2) All your silliness made my dog Jasper rowdy and wild.
- (3) Did you try the tea Glen brought?
- (4) They're holding a bake-off in church Saturday.
- (5) The teacher only had one book left.
- (6) The long rack let me hang all my clothes.
- (7) Cajun cooking uses many spices.
- (8) I need an apartment with low rent and a garage.
- (9) My trip to Rio led me to great beauty.
- (10) Laura ventured out into the cold air.

Clues:

- (1) His bright red feathers add beauty to any view.
- (2) Often seen in flocks at bird feeders, there are many varieties of this small bird.
- (3) A majestic bird of prey, it can be bald or golden.
- (4) The house and purple varieties are both red with brown wings.
- (5) The green is short and stocky, but the blue is tall with a long neck.
- (6) This medium-size black bird has iridescent head feathers.
- (7) This dark-eyed, dark gray little bird likes to feed on the ground.
- (8) This little brown bird has a tail that juts upward.
- (9) His bright orange body with black wings and head make him a joy to see.
- (10) A medium-large black bird that is very smart and hangs out in the Adirondacks.

Note to Members: We are trying to reduce our expenses by sending this newsletter electronically instead of through the regular mail. We would be very grateful if you would send your email address to us by means of the ASCR website at <http://www.capitalregionaudubon.org>. Thank you!

Request: Because we have had so little rain this past summer, birds and other animals are literally dying of thirst. You can help them by putting out shallow bowls of water. Please freshen the water daily. This is a small action that can have a great impact. Thank you!



Bird of the Month - The Cerulean Warbler by Fred Bockis

The Cerulean Warbler is an insectivorous neotropical migratory bird that winters in the Northern Andean forests from Columbia to Peru and possibly Bolivia and Venezuela. Since the 1960's, the size of this species' population has decreased by 70%. It is thought that habitat loss is the primary cause of this decline. More than 80% of the forested habitat where this species lives during the winter has been lost as a result of land-use modifications by humans. One of the major changes has been a shift from traditional shade-grown coffee plantations that preserve tree canopy cover, to de-forested plantations that grow higher yielding sun-grown varieties of coffee.



This little warbler migrates farther and earlier than most others to reach its breeding grounds in North America. Although it nests as far north as southwestern Quebec and southern Ontario, it doesn't get much farther north than our latitude in NYS. It is typically found in mature forested areas with tall, broad-leaved, deciduous trees. It builds its open-cupped nests high in the canopy and is notoriously difficult to spot. As a result, the ecology of this species is imperfectly known. Most often, its presence is detected by the sound of the male's call, a buzzed *zray zray zray zray zeeee*.

There is significant concern about the serious decline in the cerulean's numbers. It is listed as vulnerable by Audubon and it is a priority species in the Atlantic Flyway of the National Audubon Strategic Plan.

Monitoring Cerulean Warblers

by Eric J. Latini

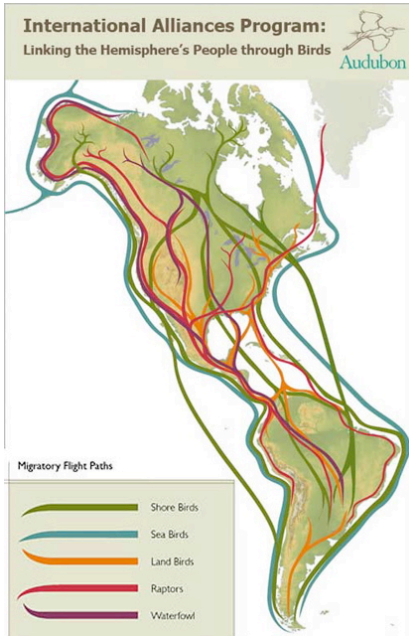


I spent six weeks, on and off, monitoring a tiny and somewhat elusive warbler. From the end of May until the first week of July at Schodack Island Park, I surveyed the Cerulean Warbler. These birds have been seen on the island and studied before, though it has been a while since they have been recorded. This survey was to record

all bird species seen and heard within a certain radius, every half of a mile at predetermined points,

with the focus being on the Cerulean. This bird is a challenge to see because it builds its nest anywhere from 60 to 90 feet up in the dense canopy. My ears were the best tools to find these high treetop singers. I managed to hear 7 of these birds singing in my surveys, and I had 3 different sightings as well. A nice highlight! It was the first time I've seen this bird, and to hear and watch them was a real treat. I have sent in data that will be used to keep and restore this area where these uncommon birds breed. Hopefully, the Ceruleans will be back in even greater numbers next year. I'll look forward to being around their songs and flights again. *ASCR joined with NYS Parks and Audubon NY to plan this monitoring as part of the Audubon in the Parks! initiative. Photo: l-r, Eric Latini (ASCR), Rich Merritt (Audubon NY), Casey Holzworth (NYS Parks); photo by Laura McCarthy, Audubon NY.*

Protecting Migratory Birds by Lois Gundrum



Birds don't recognize state and country boundary lines. They go where they need to in order to survive. Many of the birds we see in the spring and summer fly enormous distances against unbelievable odds to make it to our backyards, parks and natural areas. For example, some ruby-throated hummingbirds migrate thousands of miles. During part of their journey, many fly 20 hours, nonstop, over the Gulf of Mexico - an average distance of 500 miles. If you give some thought to the magnitude of the endurance, energy, and determination that these small creatures exhibit, you might begin to develop a sense of awe and wonder for them ... for they are truly incredible!

Probably the greatest cause of decline in neotropical migratory birds (those that winter south of the Equator and breed in North America) is loss of suitable habitat, not only at the end points of their migratory path, but all along the way. For example, red knots fly more than 9,300 miles northward to destinations above the Arctic Circle from their wintering grounds at the tip of Tierra del Fuego in South America. It is estimated that 80% of our hemisphere's red knot population stops at Delaware Bay during spring migration. They must find a safe place to rest and a ready supply of food to prepare for the next 1500 mile leg of their journey. Unfortunately, beach-front development, heavy recreational use of beach areas, conversion of coastal marshlands and water pollution are making this increasingly difficult.

Since September of 2010, National Audubon has been developing a new strategic plan under the leadership of David Yarnold, President and CEO. Projects are being developed within "flyways," taking more of a bird's eye view to conservation. North America is divided into four major flyway regions that run north/south, somewhat parallel to migratory flight paths. Audubon chapters within the same flyway are being encouraged to coordinate conservation projects and form partnerships with Latin and South American countries to protect their most vulnerable species. Our Bird of the Month, the Cerulean Warbler, is one such species within the Atlantic Flyway (North America's easternmost flyway).

How can you help? One of the greatest threats to the Cerulean Warbler is the loss of wintering habitat in South America, mainly Columbia where about 50% of the species winters. These birds can survive in the tree canopies of traditional shade-grown coffee plantations. They cannot, however, find food in the deforested plantations that specialize in higher-yield varieties of sun-grown coffee. One way you can protect these birds is to buy shade-grown coffee. You can purchase tasty, organic shade-grown coffee online through Audubon at <http://www.auduboncoffeeclub.com/home.php>. Alternatively, some local grocery stores carry organic shade-grown coffee. If not, ask for it!

Find that Bird! Answers:

- (1) I lost my credit card in Alaska. (cardinal)
- (2) All your silliness made my dog Jaspar rowdy and wild. (sparrow)
- (3) Did you try the tea Glen brought? (eagle)
- (4) They're holding a bake-off in church Saturday. (finch)
- (5) The teacher only had one book left. (heron)
- (6) The long rack let me hang all my clothes. (grackle)
- (7) Cajun cooking uses many spices. (junco)
- (8) I need an apartment with low rent and a garage. (wren)
- (9) My trip to Rio led me to great beauty. (oriole)
- (10) Laura ventured out into the cold air. (raven)



TogetherGreen Volunteer Day at SCHODACK ISLAND STATE PK

When? Saturday, September 29, 2012
9 am to 4 pm (Rain Date: Sept. 30)

What? Cut oriental bittersweet vines that are degrading the habitats of cerulean warblers and bald eagles that nest and roost on the island.

Where? Schodack Island State Park
1 Schodack Island Way
Castleton-on-Hudson, NY 12033

Why? To save the habitat of cerulean warblers, whose numbers have declined by 70% since the 1960's, more than any other neotropical migratory bird in the Northeast; and to save the habitat of bald eagles who also frequent the island. About 98 acres of the island will be involved in this project.

We will provide lunch, snacks, drinks and even give you a thank you gift for participating!
PLEASE JOIN US!!

This is National Public Lands Day! Celebrate it with us by giving something back to nature. See <http://www.capitalregionaudubon.org> for more details.
Email: president@capitalregionaudubon.org or call 518.598.3025 with questions.

FOR THE BIRDS! Contribution

I have enclosed \$_____ as a donation to the Audubon Society of the Capital Region.

I would like \$_____ of this contribution to be used to fund 'For the Birds!' in the Capital Region.

I would like \$_____ of this contribution to be used to fund additional projects that the chapter undertakes.

Print Name: _____

Address: _____

EMAIL: _____

Tell us why you joined Audubon and share any comments with us: _____

Mail to: ASCR, PO Box 14135
Albany, NY 12212-4135

Make checks payable to: ASCR

Audubon Society of the Capital Region

PO Box 14135

Albany, New York 12212-4135