



# WINGBEATS

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

-Spring/Summer 2022-

## Birding 101 Presentation Held

A “Birding 101” presentation was held on Tuesday, May 3, 2022, at the Schoharie Free Library, 103 Knowler Avenue, Schoharie. Teresa Murphy discussed the basics of bird identification, using a PowerPoint presentation. Also included in this presentation was a tutorial on how to choose and use binoculars.

For more information on Birding 101 programs and similar presentations, please contact ASCR at [capitalregionaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:capitalregionaudubon@gmail.com).

## Articles Needed!

Your editor is always on the lookout for articles for *Wingbeats* or suggestions for articles for future issues. Your submission need not only concern itself with birds: in this and past issues, we’ve covered climate change, gardening for wildlife and pollinators, and other nature-related subjects. Please contact Carol Quantock at [cquantoc@nycap.rr.com](mailto:cquantoc@nycap.rr.com) for information and to submit articles. *Wingbeats* is published quarterly in the spring, summer, fall, and winter.

### In This Issue...

Birding 101.....	1
Conservation Corner.....	2
Plant Guides, Spring Migration .....	3
Bird of the Quarter.....	4
Announcements/Info.....	5
Photos!.....	6
Kids’ Page.....	7
Chapter Leadership Information.....	8

## Birding 101 and Native Plant Talks Presented at Regeneron Pharmaceuticals

by Carol Quantock

Early in 2022, ASCR President Teresa Murphy was contacted by Brandon Bleyl, EHS Specialist at Regeneron Pharmaceuticals to ask if someone from the Society would be able to give a presentation on bird identification for Regeneron’s Earth Week activities. The activities are a part of Regeneron’s program to educate and engage employees regarding earth-friendly choices. After settling on April 20, 2022 as the date, Brandon publicized the presentation to Regeneron employees and was rewarded with many employees signing up to hear the talk and take a walk on the adjacent trail afterward.

President Teresa Murphy, Vice President Carol Quantock, and Director Eric Latini gave the hour-long presentation to an enthusiastic group. Eric and Carol led the group on a walk around the trail that abuts the Regeneron building off Jordan Road in North Greenbush. Not only did the group identify several species of birds, but also learned about habitat and bird behavior as well as flight patterns.

Judging from the interest level of the attendees, the presentation and bird walk were quite successful.

During discussions after the event with Teresa and Carol, Mr. Bleyl invited them back to give another talk, this time centered around native plants, which are the most beneficial plants for birds, insects, and wildlife. Using Carol’s PowerPoint presentation as a starting point, Teresa and Carol informed the attendees about the benefits of using native plants, identification of invasive plants and insects, and shared many resources so that individuals could investigate websites of interest to them.

As of this writing, other presentations are being considered for the fall.

# Conservation Corner

*Reprinted from NYSDEC Website*

## **Living the Green Life Be a Friend of the Environment: July 2022 Fuel up on clean air**

Ground-level ozone is a significant problem that we should try to prevent. It forms when pollutants from vehicles, industry, and consumer products enter our atmosphere in the presence of sunlight. Ozone formation is sped up by heat and long days -- so that is why we get most of our high ozone days during the summer months. Exhaust from gasoline and diesel fueled vehicles is one of the largest sources of ozone-forming pollution.

As a result, before you put your key in the ignition for your next summer road trip remember to keep the environment in mind. From walking to biking to carpooling-- there are green options you can take to help our state fuel up on clean air.

Here are a few tips to save gas and money, and preserve our air quality:

- Avoid business travel whenever possible -- conduct virtual conferences and meetings instead. There are a variety of software selections available to help meet this goal.
- Limit the length of your road trips or use public transportation. Of course, walking and biking are always great choices. Electric buses are becoming more popular on our city streets. Other options include trains, subways, and community-shared e-scooter and e-bike programs.
- Buy an electric vehicle if possible, or downsize your ride to a smaller, more energy-efficient model. Select the right size model for your household and/or business needs -- make sure you are practical.
- Fill up your tank in the evening. When you refuel, fuel vapors can escape -- which can result in ozone formation on summer days. Ozone damages crops, structures, and human health. Minimize fuel vapor evaporation by filling up at night when it is cooler.
- Don't top off your gas tank. Topping off can hurt your vehicle's emissions system. Gas pumps are intended to turn off at a fuel level which provides room in the tank for proper emissions system operations,
- Keep up with your vehicle maintenance. Check your tire pressure regularly to maximize fuel efficiency and reduce tailpipe emissions. Other regular maintenance items include changing oil as required, checking coolant levels, and cleaning or replacing air filters.
- Change your in-vehicle air compartment filter to improve the air quality in your vehicle.
- Crack your window instead of running your air conditioner. Using the wind to cool your vehicle means better gas mileage because your engine is doing less work. Also, check to see if your air conditioner is fully charged with refrigerant, so you get maximum output for the least input. If your vehicle's refrigerant is low, purchase an AC recharge kit for Do-It-Yourself re-filling, or make an appointment with a repair shop. Only run your air conditioner on high until it reaches the desired temperature -- you can turn it down to save fuel.
- Buy a new gas can that seals automatically when the spout is not in use. The seal keeps the gas and vapors in the can where they belong. Vapor escaping from gas cans creates tons of air pollution per day. These vapors include benzene, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and nitrogen oxides (NOx), which can trigger asthma symptoms and make ozone.

### **Quick tips for saving gas:**

1. *Avoid fast starts and excessive brake use. Ease off the gas pedal when coming up on a red light or stop sign.*
2. *Drive the speed limit.*
3. *Carpool and combine trips when you can.*
4. *Make a green choice when buying a new car.*
5. *Good tire maintenance = better mileage. Consider buying "low rolling resistance" tires.*
6. *Check wheel alignment as misaligned wheels will increase fuel use.*
7. *Remove items from your car that you don't need to decrease the weight your car is pulling.*
8. *Keep the engine tuned. Check the vehicle's owner's manual for a list of maintenance items.*
9. *Avoid unnecessary idling.*





## “Birdy Dozen” and “Dirty Dozen”: Plant Guides for Gardeners

For those of us who are gardeners, bird-friendly plants are high on the list of desirable plants in garden beds and on your property. Pollinator- and wildlife-friendly plants are almost synonymous, but the plants listed below have been designated by the Pennsylvania Audubon Society as the “Birdy Dozen”, for both 2021 and 2022:

### 2021 Birdy Dozen:

- ✎ Milkweed (Common, Swamp, Butterfly) [*Asclepias spp.*]
- ✎ Goldenrod [*Solidago spp.*]
- ✎ Foamflower [*Tiarella cordifolia*]
- ✎ Mountain Mint [*Pycnanthemum muticum*]
- ✎ Cardinal Flower [*Lobelia cardinalis*]
- ✎ Eastern Red Columbine [*Aquilegia Canadensis*]
- ✎ Lowbush Blueberry [*Vaccinium angustifolium*]
- ✎ Summersweet [*Clethra alnifolia*]
- ✎ Black Chokeberry [*Aronia melanocarpa*]
- ✎ White Oak [*Quercus alba*]
- ✎ Flowering Dogwood [*Cornus florida*]
- ✎ Black Tupelo [*Nyssa sylvatica*]

### 2022 Birdy Dozen:

- ✎ Scarlet Beebalm [*Monarda didyma*]
- ✎ Blazing Star [*Liatis spicata*]
- ✎ Great Blue Lobelia [*Lobelia siphilitica*]
- ✎ Dwarf-crested Iris [*Iris cristata*]
- ✎ Green and Gold [*Chrysogonum virginianum*]
- ✎ Dwarf Joe Pye Weed [*Eupatorium dubium*]
- ✎ Cranberry Viburnum [*Viburnum trilobum*]
- ✎ Virginia Sweetspire [*Itea virginica*]
- ✎ Pussywillow [*Salix discolor*]
- ✎ Wild Black Cherry [*Prunus serotina*]
- ✎ Eastern Redbud [*Cercis canadensis*]
- ✎ River Birch [*Betula nigra*]

Although it has not yet been published, there will likely be a 2022 “Birdy Dozen” plants publicized later this year. However, here are the 2021 “Dirty Dozen”, plants which are considered non-native invasives or not beneficial to birds and wildlife, published by the Virginia Cooperative Extension:

### 2021 Dirty Dozen:

- ✎ Japanese Honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*)
- ✎ Chinese Privet (*Ligustrum sinense*)
- ✎ Japanese Stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*)
- ✎ Mulberry Weed (*Fatoua villosa*)
- ✎ Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*)
- ✎ Porcelainberry (*Ampelopsis glandulosa* var. *brevipedunculata*)
- ✎ Oriental Bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*)
- ✎ Autumn Olive, Russian Olive and Thorny Olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*, *angustifolia* and *pungens*)
- ✎ English Ivy (*Hedera helix*)
- ✎ Nandina or Heavenly Bamboo (*Nandina domestica*)
- ✎ Cogon Grass or Japanese Blood Grass (*Imperata cylindrical* ‘Rubra’)
- ✎ Italian Arum (*Arum italicum*)

## Some Whys and Hows of Spring Migration

by Eric Latini

Every bird that has traveled any distance from its nesting area to avoid the effects of winter, eventually decides it is time to begin another reproductive cycle and return to the region, if not the same place where it was born or bred the year before. The precise reasons for departure vary by species, depending on sex, age, health, condition in wintering latitudes, etc. But all of these are a result of a long evolutionary process that has created a finely tuned set of internal mechanisms that coordinate with external factors. Departure schedules and migration rates reflect the optimal time for birds to arrive at their nesting areas in order to produce young in that breeding season.

For short distance migrants, local conditions may be similar to what these will be at their destination, but the farther birds winter from their breeding range, the more they must depend on internal mechanisms to set up the spring migration. For most birds, changes in day length are the cue to inducing migrants first to increase food consumption and then to depart. Males generally depart sooner to arrive at their nesting site ahead of females, and to establish territory. Adults of both sexes, and more experienced and better conditioned birds may also depart sooner. Finally, the birds traveling the least distance, to where spring arrives the soonest, will leave before those going to higher latitudes where spring comes later. Some birds choose not to leave their wintering area. Oversummering has been recorded in 15 families but is most widespread in Shorebirds, sometimes including larger species that have particularly long migrations.

Finally comes the actual departure. Birds that are ready to leave will make their first flight in favorable weather, usually waiting out any period of rain, fog, or wind factors that could impede them. Thus soaring birds like Raptors that fly only over land depart by day so they can ride the thermals. Birds traversing large expanses where they cannot land, such as the Gulf of Mexico, usually begin at night but may need to continue into the following day to reach a place to rest. And the millions of birds that depart from Mexico and Central America in spring to fly over the Gulf normally leave after dusk and reach land on the north coast of the Gulf the following afternoon. Arriving in daylight gives them a few hours to feed in the trees, or if the winds are favorable, to continue further inland to more extensive forests. Diurnal migrants usually fly for a few hours early in the morning, sometimes starting an hour before sunrise and then again later in the day. Finally, some birds such as waterfowl may fly at any hour. They will typically take off around sunset, while geese more than ducks are often seen overhead during the day. Birds also get their orientation information from the setting sun and then the stars that will follow.

Writers as early as Aristotle and those of the Bible, as well as poets like Chaucer have noted the consistent returns of familiar birds. Today however, we are still learning how they do it.

Notes taken from “Birds in Winter” By Roger F. Pasquier.



## Bird of the Quarter

by Fred Bockis

### Mockingbird



PC: National Audubon Society

Mockingbirds are best known for the habit of some species mimicking the songs of other birds, often loudly and in rapid succession. There are about 17 species. Their closest relatives are thrashers, catbirds, and tremblers.

It is a medium sized songbird, about 9 or 10 inches long from beak to tail. Its wingspan is about a foot across, and its tail is quite long at 4 or 5 inches. Males sing louder and more frequently than females. They also sing more frequently when they are looking for a mate. These birds continue learning songs throughout their entire lives. Females learn many songs, but males take the cake in the vocals category. A single male Mockingbird might learn up to 200 different songs in his lifetime!

During the 19th century, prior to their protection, wild populations plummeted on the east coast of the United States. People captured birds to keep as pets for their beautiful songs. No, these birds do not make good pets. It is illegal to own or capture one in the United States.

They prefer open areas with low shrubbery and sparse trees. They live from southeast Canada to southern Mexico and Central America. They forage for a variety of fruits, seeds, and berries. The female incubates the eggs for about two weeks before they hatch.

This species is the state bird in several U.S. states, including Florida and Texas.

## Bird Word — Musket

by Fred Bockis

A *musket* is a muzzle-loading shoulder firearm used primarily in the era before rifles.

Less well known, however, is that the word *musket* can also refer to a male sparrow hawk. This is consistent with the word's etymology: *musket* derives from the Old Italian *moschetto* (meaning either "small artillery piece" or "sparrow hawk"), which is a diminutive of the noun *mosca*, meaning "fly."

Supposedly, many early arms were named for the creatures engraved on them, which was more or less comparable to the size of the ammunition the gun used. The musket was not the only early firearm named for a bird of prey: the *falconet*, a very small cannon used in the 16th and 17th centuries, was named for the falcon.

## Doo, Doo, Doo, Lookin' Out My Back Door

by Carol Quantock

It's now one year since I assumed the editorship of *Wingbeats*. I continue to be excited about all the aspects of producing each issue and hope that you enjoy reading them.

As always in Spring, "our" birds came back and built nests. I'm thrilled to report not one, but two successful Eastern Bluebird clutches in one of the nest boxes on our property, the first clutch having begun in late March. In past years, House Wrens drove the Bluebirds away and appropriated the nest boxes. The fact that I had seen no House Wrens until May led me to believe that the Bluebirds felt secure enough to raise their young here. The fascinating part of this is that the Wrens built their nest in a nest box about 30 feet away from the Bluebird box, both at the same height. The Bluebirds are almost ready to fledge, while the Wrens are still feeding small nestlings. They appear to be coexisting nicely; I have not observed any disturbances other than Blue Jays or Robins landing in the shrub near the Bluebird box. The Bluebirds defend their nest admirably. I hope to be able to see the new batch of Bluebirds fledge, but it will take some good luck and good timing.

Another interesting phenomenon at the backyard feeders this winter was the lack of Hairy Woodpeckers. The number of Red-Bellied Woodpeckers didn't seem to have increased to a point where the Hairies would be pushed out, but I still haven't seen or heard any, even at this late date. It makes me wonder if the Red-Bellied Woodpeckers have out-competed the Hairy Woodpeckers in this area. I plan to keep watching and listening.

Please check out the articles in this issue for information on past presentations and events as well as plans for new projects.

As always, I encourage you to contact me at [cquantoc@nycap.rr.com](mailto:cquantoc@nycap.rr.com) with feedback, suggestions for articles, and articles themselves if you'd like to contribute.



# Resources and Info

## Answers to Science Quiz Questions

Here are the answers to the Science Quiz questions on page 7:

1. Bamboo
2. False - Captive mice live for up to 2 and a half years while wild mice only live for an average of around 4 months.
3. Arachnophobia
4. The tiger, weighing up to 300 kilograms (660 pounds).
5. True - They often sleep with their mouth open to cool down.
6. Yes
7. Cows
8. True
9. Antarctica
10. True
11. The cheetah (it can reach speeds of up to 120kph – 75mph).
12. A female deer.
13. False - They are carnivores.
14. Prides
15. Yes
16. The elephant - The largest on record weighed around 12,000 kilograms! (26,000 lbs.).
17. False - Snakeskin is smooth and dry.
18. Africa
19. 2
20. The Gorilla
21. A fish
22. Their spines of spiky hair.
23. True
24. A mare
25. Kids
26. The giraffe - The average height is around 5 meters (16 ft.) and the tallest on record stood nearly 6 meters (20 ft.) tall.
27. True
28. Its mane
29. 8
30. 200 million years

## ASCR Board Meetings

*Second Monday of every month*

Unless otherwise notified, meetings will be held in person. We'll be meeting at the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 510 Albany Shaker Road, Loudonville, 12211 at 6:30 PM. Face masks are optional. This is an easy and meaningful way to get involved. 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](mailto:capitalregionaudubon@gmail.com) for more information.

## ANNUAL SEED SALE (FALL 2022)

This event is one of our largest undertakings. Fred and Teresa have been a great team in coordinating the sale from orders to delivery these 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 will be looking for about 2-4 people to help us out.

This year, there will be a few changes in the products being offered. Due to the ongoing war in Ukraine, sunflower seeds are in shorter supply, and supply chain issues continue to impact product and shipping costs. More information, including the 2022 price and product list and ordering instructions, will be published in this newsletter as well as on our website.

**Be sure to check our website for more programs and information!**  
[www.capitalregionaudubon.org](http://www.capitalregionaudubon.org)



# Get Involved!

## A Few Photos from Our Recent Presentations/Activities



*Teresa Murphy, left, and Carol Quantock present "Birding 101" at Regeneron Pharmaceuticals  
Photos courtesy Cooper Wright of Regeneron*



*Students of varying age groups learn how to build nest boxes at St. Michael's Church in Troy on June 25, 2022*



*Left photo: volunteer Paul Quantock teaches nest box building techniques; center: ASCR Director Eric Latini showing where to hammer one of several nails; right: ta-da! ASCR member Fred Bockis, right, with proud nest box builder, showing the finished product.*





# ACTIVITIES



## Science Quiz

Take this fun animal quiz and test your knowledge of the animal kingdom. How much do you know about animals such as the tiger, lion, shark, cat, crocodile, giraffe, snake, rabbit and spider? Answer as many of the thirty questions related to the animal kingdom as you can. Questions vary from easy to challenging and cover everything from insects to pets, wild animals, fish, birds and reptiles. When you're done, go to page 5 and check to see how many answers you got correct.

1. What food makes up nearly all (around 99%) of a Giant Panda's diet?
2. True or false? Mice live for up to 10 years.
3. What is the name of the phobia that involves an abnormal fear of spiders?
4. What is the largest type of 'big cat' in the world?
5. True or false? Crocodiles have no sweat glands so they use their mouths to release heat.
6. Are butterflies insects?
7. What are female elephants called?
8. True or false? Bats are mammals.
9. Bees are found on every continent of earth except for one, which is it?
10. True or false? Cats spend an average of 13 to 14 hours a day sleeping.
11. What is the fastest land animal in the world?
12. A 'doe' is what kind of animal?
13. True or false? Cougars are herbivores.
14. Groups of lions are known as what?
15. Is a dolphin a mammal?
16. What is the largest land animal in the world?
17. True or false? Snakes have slimy skin.
18. What is the only continent on earth where Giraffes live in the wild?
19. How many pairs of wings does a bee have?
20. What type of animal is the largest primate in the world?
21. Is a shark a fish or a mammal?
22. What is the most recognizable feature of a hedgehog's appearance?
23. True or false? Owls are far-sighted, meaning that anything within a few inches of their eyes can't be seen properly.
24. What is the name of an adult female horse?
25. What are baby goats called?
26. What is the tallest animal in the world?
27. True or false? Rabbits are born blind.
28. What is the most recognizable physical feature of the male lion?
29. How many legs does a spider have?
30. The crocodile species is believed to have been around for how long? 2 million years or 200 million years?



## 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:	Fred Bockis
Treasurer:	René Facchetti
Co-Treasurer:	Krista Galliher
Recording Officer:	Lindsay Homenick

### Directors

Eric Latini  
Vacancy

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 the chapter for the year.

**Please join us!**

Email  
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### **Questions?**

Email: [capitalregionaudubon@gmail.com](mailto: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!!