



Spring 2017 WINGBEATS

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

Bird Boxes and Conservation

Written by: Thomas Hartman

As spring finally thaws its way into our yards and parks we may spot the warm reddish hue of an American Kestrel or an Eastern Bluebird with its flash of blue. However, due to habitat loss many birds will have a tough time finding homes in which to settle. They may find their former habitats paved over by parking lots or roads, or former hunting grounds no longer supporting the amount of food needed to raise a family. Though a species of [least concern](#), the American Kestrel has been experiencing steady decline since the [late 1960's](#). This is thought to be attributed to [habitat loss](#) and likely increased use of [pesticide application](#).

One thing we can do to help kestrels, and other struggling birds is to boost the available habitat by installing birdhouses. Birdhouses offer protection from predators, warmth during cold nights and an ideal place to raise young. Helping these birds settle down into our community can create an explosion of life. Flashing feathers and bursts of color will help liven up a space that may have grown desolate during winter. Birds will give seeds a free ride to new locations, ushering in a new wave of green. Having native birds nearby will encourage other ecosystem services, such as a natural rodent or insect removal operation. And each spring you can be apart of a growing movement of people who check their birdhouses as citizen scientists for Project [NestWatch](#)!

In fact, there are birdhouses all over the Capital Region. The Audubon Society Capital Region has worked with volunteers, parks and sundry organizations to set up birdhouses all over the area. Some recent additions are two kestrel boxes installed by ASCR volunteer Fred Bockis at Liberty Ridge Farm in Schaghticoke, last Spring five bluebird homes were installed in Peebles Island State Park.

To attract a certain species, make sure that you select a birdhouse design for that bird and set it up in their habitat. Aim to install the box in early spring while many birds are returning and looking for nests.

Making sure the box is created to the bird's liking is very important and can vary greatly among bird species. According to [nestwatch.org](#), Eastern Bluebird boxes must be installed four to six feet (continued on page 3....)



ASCR volunteer Fred Bockis installs kestrel boxes at Liberty Ridge Farm. March 2017.

In This Issue...

Bird Boxes and Conservation	1
Upcoming ASCR Events	2
Bald Eagle Nest Watch Program	3
Simple Ways To Help Conserve Birds	4
Raptor Fest 2017	5
Volunteer Spotlight: Fred Bockis	6
Chapter Supporters	7

Spring Events

Audubon: The Film.

Saturday April 22, 2:00pm

Guilderland Public Library

2228 Western Ave., Guilderland, NY 12084

In celebration of John James Audubon's birthday on April 26th, the Guilderland Public Library and ASCR will host a screening of this documentary film about his life.

Bird Walk! at Albany Rural Cemetery

April 29, 7:30am

Cemetery Ave, Albany, NY 12204

(main entrance is off of route 378 in Menands)

Don't miss the mating and migration rites of Spring in the bucolic and historic setting of the Albany Rural Cemetery! Join us in the Chapel with Michael Radlick from the Albany Rural Cemetery as he will give a quick intro to the history and design of this historic cemetery's landscape. This National Historic Landmark is an example of the rural or garden cemetery movement of the 1800's with its winding roads, wooded hills and beautiful burial monuments. This cemetery features the resting places of John Boyd Thacher (Thacher State Park) and President Chester Arthur and many other notables.

The bird walk will be lead by an ASCR volunteer and we will listen and look for spring migrators and avian denizens as we walk the cemetery's rolling terrain of various paved surfaces. Make sure to bring binoculars and wear comfortable shoes and clothing.

Space is limited and *registration* is required! Please call the Albany Rural Cemetery Office at 518- 463-7017 to reserve your spot!

Raptor FEST!

May 20, 8:00am-4:00pm

Schodack Island State Park,

1 Schodack Island Way, Schodack landing, NY 12156

Come join us for our first ever Raptor FEST! Co-hosted with the Schodack Island State Park, Raptor FEST is sure to be great time for the whole family! See the full page announcement in this newsletter for more information!

Birds and Beer Walk with the Rensselaer Land Trust

Sunday May 7, 8:00am

Observe birds along the [Hoosic River Greenway](#) trail in Hoosick Falls and then head to [Brown's Walloomsac Tap-room and Brewery](#) in North Hoosic. Walk is led by an ASCR leader. Bring binoculars. \$5 donation for the walk.

Wild Parsnip Eradication at Thatcher State Park

Details still in the works. But sometime in July!

**Be sure to check back on our website
or Facebook page as more programs
may be added!**



“What’d I Miss?”

In January we announced our very first Strategic Plan, outlining the vision and direction of our chapter for the next 5 years. If you haven't seen it, check it out on our website here: [the Strategic Plan](#).

We had a very successful Annual Meeting this past February with over 50 people in attendance at the East Greenbush Library. Guest speaker and artist Steven Jay Sanford presented “Beginning Ornithology: An Introduction to the Science of Birds,” which was complete with live ducks for demonstration!

In March, several board members attended the Audubon Council of New York State this spring, where chapters from all over New York State gathered to collaborate and share new ways to support the Audubon mission. Also, in March, ASCR hosted Warren Greene who presented his photography of the Catskills and the Adirondacks at the Bethlehem Public Library.

April has already seen a flurry of activity with the Invasive Species Education Fair at Siena College and John Burrough's *Birds of April Bird Walk* at Schodack Island State Park.

Bird Boxes and Conservation . . .continued from page 1

off the ground within a grassland or open woodland. Placing the home on a pole, instead of a tree will help keep it resilient to insects. The box's opening should ideally be 2 1/4" high and 1 3/8" wide in order to keep larger predators out and to discourage unwanted birds. Each box should be placed at least 300 feet apart.

In comparison, the American Kestrel requires the nest to be placed 10' to 30' off the ground, with the box opening 3" by 3". You can place these boxes on a pole, a tree or a building, but there needs to be half a mile or more between each box.

Even though some birds might have very picky requirements for their homes, do not be discouraged if the bird you're looking does not settle down in your home.

If you want to know more about how to install your own birdhouse, check out nestwatch.org or check out our [Education](#) page. ASCR also makes bluebird boxes which you can purchase to support the chapter and its programs. And just recently, we finished our first Bluebird Box Blueprints available for download on our website! 🐦



Got successful nesting box stories? Share them with Audubon Society of the Capital Region on our [Facebook](#) page!

ASCR Bald Eagle Nest Watch Update



The Bald Eagle nesting season is in full swing right now. While other birds winter in warmer locales down South, our national symbol starts a grueling 5 month breeding season around the first part of February. They have endured snow, wind, cold, rain, and even a Nor'easter that dropped two feet of snow on the Capital Region in the middle of March. The goal of all this hardship is now hatching at eagle nests all over the region. These tiny, fuzzy heads bring a new challenge for the eagle pairs. They now have to feed 1 to 3 eaglets in the nest for the next 10 to 15 weeks until their offspring take their first flight. Then the parents continue to feed the fledglings after that for another 2 to 4 weeks until they finally venture out on their own.

While this is all going on, 12 dedicated Bald Eagle nest watchers at the Audubon Society of the Capital Region document the process. The [Bald Eagle Nest Watch](#) program is watching 12 active nests around the Capital Region. There have already been signs that suggest small eaglets are in the some of the nests and more will be hatching soon. The goal of the program is to help with the conservation effort and report back to NYS agencies on the health of the population as well as studying the growing interaction between eagles and humans. For more information or to help out visit our [website](#) or email the coordinator at ASCRBEW@gmail.com. 🐦

Simple Way To Help Conserve Birds: Do Windows

Written by: Craig Thompson

Nothing's better than gazing out the kitchen window over a warm cup of morning coffee at the clouds of birds gathered at your feeding station. Nice handiwork, Smugsy! But in concentrating lots of small birds in a small space, feeding stations often attract sharp-shinned hawks and Cooper's hawks, accipiters who make their living catching small birds. Those dickey birds innocently enjoying a white proso-millet breakfast in your yard will flush in blind frenzy upon the approach of an accipiter, often wildly crashing into nearby windows, which appear to them to reflect the safety of the landscape (which is actually behind them). Sometimes these birds are merely stunned, sometimes worse. Easy pickings either way. This "face plant" phenomenon can be especially problematic with south-facing windows.

Short of moving the entire feeding station itself, there are several simple home remedies you could try which either eliminate or break up that reflection. Interior strategies include affixing owl or hawk decals, or even children's artwork, to the window; or soaping the windows up, maybe with spray-on "snow." All of these work pretty well. You could also close drapes, shades, or curtains, but these obviously make watching the birds share your largesse impossible.

Effective exterior treatments include hanging screening or netting across the window, or dangling moving objects like owl balloons or mylar strips on the outside,

none of which is very aesthetically pleasing. You can find UV warming decals, which are transparent to the human eye, that stick on the outside of your window at [Duncraft](#), [Wild Birds Unlimited](#), or [Backyard Birds](#). Birds can see the UV spectrum, but humans cannot, which makes the decals virtually invisible, a most unobtrusive solution to the problem. If you can see old bird face-plants on your window panes, you ought to try one of these remedies.

The bird strike phenomenon is much more problematic in [high-rise urban areas](#), where oceans of reflective surfaces falsely promise safe passage, claiming millions of birds annually. Innovative technologies in glass production, such as fritted glass, are doing much to reduce this problem.

One of the more difficult, and initially amusing, reflectivity problems to resolve is *window pecking*. During the breeding season, males of the species suffer greatly from testosterone poisoning and will go to any length to drive other males out of their territory. Birds often perch on window sills and, looking into the window, discover, much to their ire, that there is another bird exactly like them inhabiting their turf. The male thereupon will peck, and peck, and peck.....seemingly forever. Or at least until breeding season is over. As I say, it's only initially amusing. It gives all males throughout the animal kingdom a bad name. This is where you need to put aesthetics aside and hang that netting, spray that fake snow...anything to keep that goofy bird from driving you crazy. Just hope he gets the message!



Become a Chapter Supporter and receive your own window cling (seen here) to help prevent bird-window strikes! The Audubon Society of the Capital Region encourages its members to protect birds by learning more about what they can do to prevent bird strikes. Start today by going to [Project Safe Flight](#).

Join *Audubon Society of the Capital Region* and the *Schodack Island State Park* for **RAPTOR FEST 2017**. Come join us for a morning bird walk, owl pellet dissection, how to build a bird box, a bounce house, live birds of prey demonstration and our very own Bald Eagle mascot! Cost is admission into the Schodack Island State Park. Camping sites are available at the Park.

Check out our website or facebook page for more information! But make sure to join us for our first-ever RAPTOR FEST!!!

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE CAPITAL REGION

RAPTOR FEST

At Schodack Island State Park

FLIGHT DEMONSTRATIONS 🦅 NEST BOX BUILDING 🦅 WILDLIFE REHABILITATORS

🦅 VENDORS & FOOD 🦅 BALD EAGLE WATCHING 🦅 KIDS' ACTIVITIES 🦅



SATURDAY, MAY 20, 2017

Main Event: 10am-4pm
Migratory Bird Walk: 8am
Raptor Walk: 9:30am



Book signing with
local author,
Darryl McGrath

All Day Raptor Fun!



FRIENDS OF
SCHODACK ISLAND STATE PARK



NEW YORK
STATE OF
OPPORTUNITY
Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation

SCHODACK ISLAND STATE PARK & CAMPGROUND | 1 SCHODACK ISLAND WAY | SCHODACK LANDING, NY 12156

\$6 Vehicle Use Fee. No Vehicle Use Fee while camping. Contact the Park at (518) 732-0187.

ASCR relies solely on the time and effort of volunteers to keep the chapter operating. We need people like you to get involved. No time commitment or activity is too small. We'd like to [hear from you](#) how we can better engage volunteers.

The working groups below help to give brief descriptions of all that we do. If you see something you would be interested in exploring, or have other ideas, don't hesitate to [contact us](#).

If you have a passion for nature and the desire to make a difference in your community, we do too!

*Come volunteer with us at the
Audubon Society of the Capital Region!*

Working Group Descriptions

ASCR is dedicated to the protection and conservation of birds, wildlife and the environment.

Membership & Volunteers

Leaders: Fred Bockis & Dave Covey
Maintain membership records. Work with other Working Groups to secure volunteers for ASCR events and engage current members.

Programs

Leader: John Loz
Plan, arrange and promote lectures and workshops (i.e., Speaker Series). Plan, arrange and promote field trips (i.e., Bird Walks).

Conservation & Advocacy

Leaders: Dave Covey & Eric Latini
Plan, coordinate and maintain conservation activities (i.e., Tangle-tainers). Partner with similar organizations on conservation and advocacy efforts.

Marketing & Communications

Leader: Rebecca Allmond
Review and edit all ASCR publications. Write, design and disseminate communications and information. Advertise events (i.e. press releases, social media). Maintain website. Photograph events.

Education

Leader: Craig Thompson
Conduct educational programs (i.e., Ornithology for Kids at children's camps). Coordinate Citizen Science programs (i.e., Christmas Bird Count)

Finance

Leader: Rene Fachetti
Create budget for approval (annual). Develop fundraising initiatives (i.e., Bird Seed Sale). Engage in fund development (i.e., grant writing).

Volunteer Spotlight: Fred Bockis



Q: Where, or in what field do you work?

A: *I retired from the Federal and the NY State government and the military (US Navy Reserve). I was a Russian linguist and also worked for Social Security.*

Q: How are you involved with ASCR?

A: *I have been involved, at one time or another, in all aspects of ASCR. My concentration now is Membership, which I love. It's great introducing a new member to the wonders of the Audubon Society and all the neat environmental things we do.*

Q: When did you first become interested in birding?

A: *I always wanted to do birding when I stopped working and I began pursuing my plan.*

Q: What made you want to get involved with ASCR, your local Audubon Chapter?

A: *I was recruited by John Loz, the ASCR previous President, back in June 2011, and was swept up by his enthusiasm for birds and birding.*

Q: What is your favorite bird?

A: *The Indigo Bunting - due to its brilliant color when seen through binoculars.*

Q: What do you like to do when you are not birding?

A: *I'm always busy. I go to free science lectures at UAlbany and hikes at the Albany Pine Bush. This year went on a tour of a maple syrup making farm and to a lecture by the Sierra Club on geothermal systems for households. I also do Woodworking in my garage, where I make book shelves and cabinets. I play chess, and do figure skating, and in between I do difficult crossword puzzles.*

**Here's a Special Shout out and
THANK YOU to our Chapter Supporters !**

Bob Mackey, Clifton Park
Martha Deane, Albany
Colin Demers, Latham

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

OFFICERS

President:	Lindsay Homenick
Vice President:	David Covey
Correspondence Officer:	Rebecca Allmond
Treasurer:	René Facchetti
Recording Officer:	Craig Thompson

DIRECTORS

Aimee Brunelle
Ryan Henderson
Eric Latini
Craig Thompson
Mike Silo

BOARD MEMBER EMERITUS

Jerry Brown
David Gibson

WEBMASTER:

WebAdmin:	René Facchetti
Info@CapitalRegionAudubon	Rebecca Allmond

WORKING GROUPS AND LEADERS

Conservation & Advocacy: Eric Latini &
David Covey
Conservation@CapitalRegionAudubon.org

Education: Craig Thompson
Education@CapitalRegionAudubon.org

Programs: John Loz
Programs@CapitalRegionAudubon.org

Marketing & Communications: open
Marketing@CapitalRegionAudubon.org

Finance: René Facchetti
Finance@CapitalRegionAudubon.org

Membership and Volunteers: Fred Bockis &
David Covey
Membership@CapitalRegionAudubon.org
Volunteer@CapitalRegionAudubon.org

**Audubon Society
of the Capital Region**
P.O. Box 14135
Albany, NY 12212-4135
www.capitalregionaudubon.org

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 and camp sponsorships for youth. The Chapter Supporter membership is just \$20. In return you get:

- Your support highlighted in the Quarterly newsletter: *WingBeats*
- 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!!



Great Horned Owl, courtesy of Drew Cashman

Questions?

Email: info@capitalregionaudubon.org

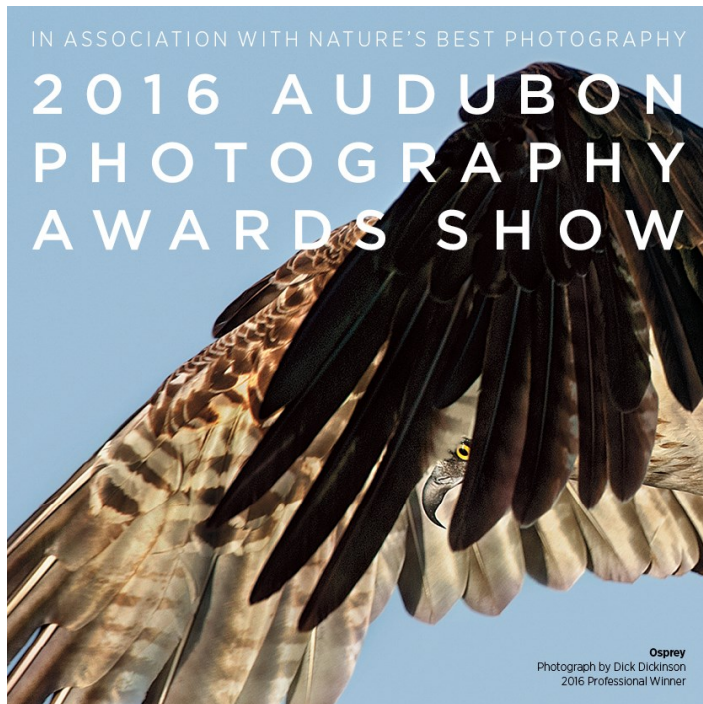
National Audubon Society Photography Awards exhibit, "Canada Lake Portraits" on display at The Arkell Museum

For a limited three week exhibition from May 18th to June 8th, there will be a travelling photography exhibit from the National Audubon Society 2016 Photography Awards at [The Arkell Museum of Canajoharie](#), sponsored by our western chapter neighbors of the [Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society](#). Selected from over 7,000 entries—submitted from all 50 states, DC, and Canada—the winning photos were published in the May-June 2016 issue of Audubon Magazine. A panel of five judges had the daunting task of sifting through the stunning images and grading them based on technical quality, originality, and artistic merit, where they put together the top 100 bird photos for last years issue.

Twelve of these images will be on display in the lower level gallery space of the museum.



Inset: An Arkell Museum installer is checking to make sure that no damage will occur to the art by light levels in the exhibit. Photo: Jenna Peterson



In addition to the photography exhibit, there will be a summer-long exhibition called "Canada Lake Portraits" featuring more than twenty pieces from the Arkell collection by Paul Bransom. The collection showcases birds such as waterfowl, the natural habitats in the surrounding area of the lake, and a view of Canada Lake by Charles Sarka, Bransom's good friend and a companion of the Bransom family during their summers at the lake.

[The Arkell Museum at Canajoharie](#) is open Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm; Wednesday from 10:00 am to 7:30pm; Saturday and Sunday, Noon to 5:00PM. Admission is \$9.00 for adults and \$6.50 for students and seniors, but it is FREE for members. The museum is located at 2 Erie Boulevard and has off street parking and is wheelchair accessible.



Birding in the Catskill Mountains - This is Not Your Typical Birding Weekend!

Enjoy a number of speakers and birding field trips in the Catskills from Friday June 9th through Sunday June 11th! Saturday's keynote speaker will be [Richard Crossley](#) where you also will be able to bird with him on Sunday morning as well! Also, enjoy a visit from John James Audubon himself! Brian "Fox" Ellis portrays Audubon in a dynamic performance that engages listeners in scientific inquiry, natural history and ornithology as Friday evening's keynote speaker.

For more information about this program, see the full schedule and register at the link below:

<http://catskillcenter.org/taking-flight-registration/>