



WINGBEATS

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

-Spring 2021 -

Bird Walks to Resume in May

We are pleased to announce that our bird walks will resume on May 22, 2021, at the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve, on Riverview Road in Clifton Park. We will meet at 7:30 AM in the parking lot at the intersection of Riverview and Van Vranken Roads near the Whipple Truss Bridge. The walk will be led by Eric Latini, and is limited to a maximum of 15 people.

Appropriate social-distancing and face mask guidelines will be followed. Hand sanitizer is recommended, but not required. A few pair of binoculars will be available to borrow if needed.

The rain date for this walk is Sunday, May 23. For more information and to sign up, please go to <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0B49A8A72FABFE3-visher>. Questions should be directed to info@capitalregionaudubon.org or president@capitalregionaudubon.org.

Our next walk is tentatively planned for June. Details will be posted on our website (<https://www.capitalregionaudubon.org/>) and Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/theASCR>) as they become available.

In This Issue...

Bird Walks, Earth Day.....	1
Conservation Corner, Jen Ford.....	2
Book Review, Bully Birds.....	3
Bird of the Quarter.....	4
Get Involved!.....	5-6
Activities.....	7
Chapter Leadership Information.....	8

Earth Day 2021

Every year on April 22, Earth Day marks the anniversary of the birth of the modern environmental movement in 1970.

ORIGINS OF EARTH DAY

Earth Day 1970 gave a voice to an emerging public consciousness about the state of our planet.

In the decades leading up to the first Earth Day, Americans were consuming vast amounts of leaded gas through massive and inefficient automobiles. Industry belched out smoke and sludge with little fear of the consequences from either the law or bad press. Air pollution was commonly accepted as the smell of prosperity. Until this point, mainstream America remained largely oblivious to environmental concerns and how a polluted environment threatens human health.

However, the stage was set for change with the publication of Rachel Carson's New York Times bestseller *Silent Spring* in 1962. The book represented a watershed moment, selling more than 500,000 copies in 24 countries as it raised public awareness and concern for living organisms, the environment and the inextricable links between pollution and public health.

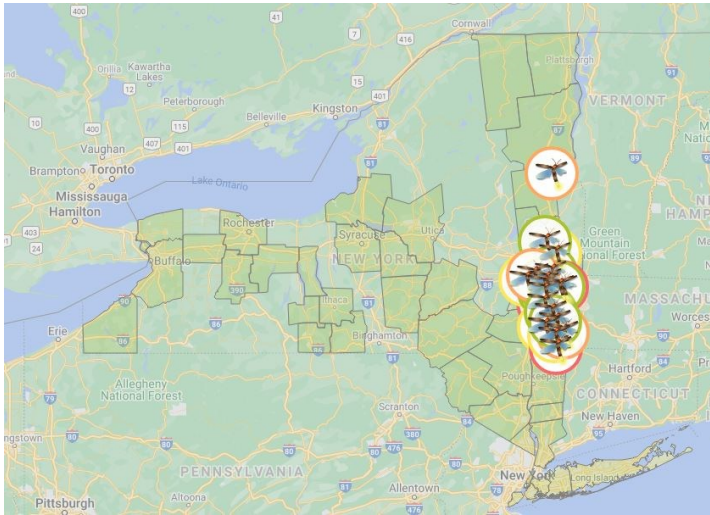
Earth Day 1970 would come to provide a voice to this emerging environmental consciousness, and putting environmental concerns on the front page.

Source: earthday.org/history/

For more information, click the link below:

<https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2021/>

Conservation Corner



Sourced from: homegrownnationalpark.org

Do you have a garden? If so, have you been planting native plants? More than likely, you've noticed that you've seen more birds and other pollinators in your yard. Increasing native plants in your landscape is a "win-win" for you, the birds that visit your yard, and all the insects that will populate it.

The Homegrown National Park is a grassroots effort begun by Dr. Doug Tallamy. The idea is to create a habitat, worldwide, in order to restore biodiversity for the good of planet Earth. It's a wonderful idea: you plant native plants in your garden, remove invasives and non-native ornamentals, and then add your square footage or acreage to the map. The goal of Homegrown National Park is to add 20 million acres of native plantings in the United States, which is roughly half of the area of lawns on privately-owned properties!

The outlined counties in the map above represent counties in New York where property owners have enrolled in the HNP program. The circles represent properties in Capital Region counties that are registered in the Park. For more information, and to sign up your property, go to <https://homegrownnationalpark.org/about-us>.

Congratulations to Jen Ford!

Congratulations to Jennifer Ford, who has completed the training and volunteer requirements to become a Level 9 Master Naturalist through Cornell University.

Jen volunteers as the Bald Eagle Nest Watch Coordinator for the ASCR, coordinating volunteers who monitor bald eagle nests during the nesting season. She recruits and assigns volunteers to nests, reviews submitted data, and keeps records of significant nest activity.

Jen also serves as a Volunteer Naturalist at the Albany Pine Bush Preserve (<https://albanypinebush.org/index.php?section=volunteer-jobs>), providing information to visitors on Pine Bush ecology, management, and natural history. She records data on visitation to the preserve and its use, as well as reporting species she observes in the preserve (including invasive species).

For more information about Jen and the Master Naturalist Program, visit <https://blogs.cornell.edu/nymasternaturalist/2021/02/01/featured-master-naturalist-jen-ford/>.

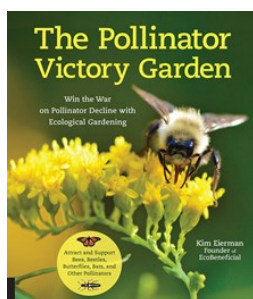


Spring Book Review: Three Great Books on Gardening for Wildlife

Gardening season is here! If you would like to help pollinators, birds, and other wildlife while you garden, I have some book suggestions for you!

The Pollinator Victory Garden

by Kim Eimerman



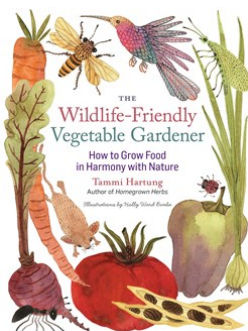
This comprehensive guide covers the basics of pollinators, how to provide them with places to live and necessary food resources, and how to create a “Pollinator Victory Garden”. Also included is a seasonal “to do” list for maintaining the garden, and plenty of gorgeous color pictures.

This book is beautiful to look at, and a valuable resource for helping our pollinators, which then benefits many other species.

The Wildlife Friendly Vegetable Gardener

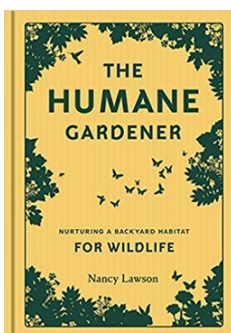
by Tammi Hartung

This book focuses specifically on how to make your vegetable garden a place where insects, other pollinators, and the birds who feed on them, can thrive. It is full of great advice on how to have a productive vegetable garden without harming the local ecosystem. It has beautiful, whimsical illustrations. I get this book out every spring!



The Humane Gardener: Nurturing a Backyard Habitat for Wildlife

by Nancy Lawson



This is one of my favorite gardening books. This is a comprehensive guide to welcoming wildlife to your backyard. This wonderful book covers the use of native plants, how to let nature guide your garden planning, providing food and nesting sites, creating healthy soil, and much more. While this book does contain a lot of information, it is not overwhelming, contains helpful

photographs, and is very easy to read. Highly recommended!

-Jennifer Ford

How to Discourage Bully Birds at Your Feeders

by Teresa Murphy

I’m sure you’ve experienced masses of blackbirds and grackles swarming at your feeders and not allowing smaller birds from feeding. While we don’t want to stop providing food for these birds, they are being bullies and you need to level the playing field.

Different species of birds prefer a wide range of assorted foods and learning their likes and dislikes helps maintain equality at the feeders. The problem is, blackbirds, grackles and starlings band together in huge groups that can wipe out all of the feed in a matter of minutes.

Knowing feeding habits of different birds can help you with this problem. You can throw some seed under a platform feeder because blackbirds tend to avoid going underneath anything to search for food. Blackbirds prefer to have their fellow blackbirds nearby as they feed, so they tend to leave solitary stations to other birds.

Safflower seed appeals to cardinals, finches and other songbirds. However, blackbirds, starlings and even squirrels find it distasteful. It is a little more expensive, but it can save you money in the end by not being eaten so quickly by larger birds. Fill all but one of your feeders with the safflower seed and leave a lone platform feeder filled with the mix that the blackbirds prefer. Keep that feeder further away from the other feeders. If starlings are the problem, remove all seed that isn’t safflower.



Bird of the Quarter

Pied-billed Grebe



PC: Luke Seitz / Macaulay Library

- ✎ The Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*) is a small diving bird, approximately 11.5-15.0 inches in length. Both sexes can weigh anywhere from 8.9 oz. to 20 oz., with an adult wingspan of about 19 inches to 24.5 inches. In size, they are roughly the size of a Green-winged Teal.
- ✎ Pied-billed Grebes are small, chunky swimmers/divers. They have compact bodies and slender necks, with relatively large, blocky heads and short, thick bills. They have virtually no tail.
- ✎ Most are brown birds, slightly darker above and more tawny-brown on the underparts. During spring and summer, the crown and nape are dark and the throat is black. While breeding, the bill is whitish with a black band (“pied”), but otherwise is yellow-brown. Juveniles have striped faces.
- ✎ They can adjust their buoyancy and often use this ability to float with just the upper half of the head above the water. They catch small fish and invertebrates by diving or simply slowly submerging. They build floating nests of cattails, grasses, and other vegetation.
- ✎ They are mostly found in sluggish rivers, freshwater marshes, lakes, and estuaries in the U.S. and southern Canada.
- ✎ The Latin genus name for “grebe” means “feet at the buttocks”—an apt descriptor for these birds, whose feet are indeed located near their rear ends. This body plan, a common feature of many diving birds, helps grebes propel themselves through water. Lobed (not webbed) toes further assist with swimming. Pied-billed Grebes walk awkwardly on land; therefore, they spend most of their time in the water.
- ✎ Chicks typically leave the nest the first day after hatching and spend much of their first week riding around on a parent’s back. They usually spend most of their first 3 weeks on or near the nest platform.

The Call of Spring

by Carol Quantock

It’s snowing outside as I write this piece, but April in Upstate New York is a roller-coaster of weather. Three seasons’ worth of weather often takes place in a day, including high winds, driving rain, slushy, drippy snowfall, and almost tropical heat and humidity. Despite the meteorological drama, birds have been arriving every day, and new growth has been sprouting for a few weeks already. Last year at this time, we were experiencing the shell-shock of lockdown, quarantine, hand sanitizer, N95 face masks, and the terrible realization that COVID-19 would be with us for a long time to come. Hope and optimism seemed to be a thing of the past, and Spring 2020 dragged into the summer and fall. To be sure, there were positive effects: home gardening became a very popular hobby, we learned to use technology that we were hardly aware of just a few months before, and people stepped up to assist others who were in desperate need of help. And the birds migrated as usual, and our world became green again.

Now, with caution, common sense, and vaccines, we are starting to emerge from the chrysalis to be able to enjoy the company of family and friends again. We will be able to experience the camaraderie with like-minded people when we return to group bird walks this summer. To me, the joy of bird-song is even more precious this year, and I am happily appreciating the beauty of nature more than ever.

You will see elsewhere in this issue that we’ll be returning to in-person meetings this May, and we’re planning outdoor activities throughout the remainder of the spring and summer. I wish you a most enjoyable, and healthy, spring.

I hope you enjoy this issue. As your new editor, I’m aware that I have a tough act to follow. Nichole Fox did a wonderful job, and she deserves kudos for her excellent work. I encourage you to contact me at cquantoc@nycap.rr.com with feedback, suggestions for articles, and articles themselves if you’d like to contribute.



Get Involved!

As mentioned in our three most recent Newsletters, Audubon has been working on its strategy during the past year. After defining our vision, mission statement, and niche, we have defined the threats to birds that we would like to focus on as well as the tools we will use to do it.

We have written an action plan for the 2021-2024 period to define which programs we would like to implement each year regarding strategy, community engagement, funding, bird-friendly communities, climate change, birding for beginners, conservation, etc. This action plan was voted on during our December Board meeting on December 14th, and has been published on our website.

Our chapter is run only by volunteers. Therefore, the more volunteers we have, the more we will be able to do. You don't have to be a board member to participate you can join us simply as a volunteer to help out with one or more programs.

Send us an email to info@capitalregionaudubon.org to ask about attending our board meetings.

ASCR Board Meetings

Second Monday of every month

Meetings will once again be held in person, beginning May 10! We'll be meeting at the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 510 Albany Shaker Road, Loudonville, 12211 at 6:30 PM. Face masks will be required. 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: info@capitalregionaudubon.org for more information.

Be sure to check our website for more programs and information!
www.capitalregionaudubon.org

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE CAPITAL REGION PLANS BIRD WALKS IN MAY, JUNE

Now that most of us have been vaccinated against COVID-19, ASCR is planning bird walks and education events for late spring and summer. Our first walk is scheduled for May 22 at the Vischer Ferry Preserve in Clifton Park (see page 1).

A second walk is being planned for June, with other events on the horizon for later in the season.

If you are interested in attending or assisting with this walk or future events, please email info@capitalregionaudubon.org.

BALD EAGLE WATCHERS NEEDED

Do you love to watch birds and wildlife? Do you enjoy spending time outdoors? Are you looking for ways to volunteer that allow you to do both of those things? Then Bald Eagle Nest Watch might be for you!

In this fun and flexible program, volunteers monitor a Bald Eagle nest once a week, and submit observations via an online citizen science website (citsci.org). This data is used by the NYSDEC to help monitor Bald Eagle nests, and success rates, in this area. **This project started in January and will run through June 2021!**

Please contact Jennifer Ford, Bald Eagle Nest Watch Coordinator at jsf@nycap.rr.com for more information.

ANNUAL SEED SALE (FALL 2021)

This event is one of our largest undertakings. Fred has been a staple in coordinating the sale from orders to delivery these last few years, but
(continued on page 6)

Get Involved!

(continued from page 5)

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.

BIRD WINDOW COLLISION PROGRAM ADVOCATES

Bird-window collisions occur on average one million times a day in the USA and it is one of the top 3 human causes of bird mortality worldwide. Our chapter delivers presentations about this problem to educate people and provide solutions to reduce the threat of their windows. We are still looking for advocates ready to deliver a presentation once or twice per year. The presentation is ready to use with slides and notes included. We train you and partner you with someone experienced! We are hoping to reach new audiences but need our volunteers!

If you are not comfortable with public speaking but feel this project speaks to you, you can help us by making window collision deterrent products available locally (contact us for details).

CLIMATE WATCH PROGRAM SURVEYORS

Audubon's Climate Watch is a new community science program that explores how North American birds are responding to climate change. We are looking at participants willing to conduct surveys for Eastern Bluebirds once annually, between May 15 to June 15. Locations include the Albany Pine Bush Preserve, Five Rivers, Vischer Ferry, Schodack Island, Troy/Cropseyville and can be completed at your leisure. We are also looking for volunteers to help coordinate the program – including recruiting and training participants, assisting volunteers in planning and conducting Climate Watch surveys, and ensuring that the data collected is submitted to the national Climate Watch team.

BIRDING FOR BEGINNERS WEBINAR (BIRDING 101)

Our chapter has set up a webinar to educate our

community on the basics of birding (when and where to bird, how to use binoculars, which clues should you collect on the field to identify birds).

We are looking for volunteers to help us deliver this presentation to our community. The presentation is ready to use with notes for each slide and we will train and partner you with somebody who has already delivered the program. We aim to offer this program two or three times in 2021 (please know we will do this as a team, you are not required to offer more than one presentation). You can also help us by reaching out to local libraries and preserves to organize the webinar without delivering the presentation yourself.

BIRDING FOR BEGINNERS (WALKS)

Depending on the Covid-19 situation, we will resume our first-time birders' walks in May or June of 2021. If you would like to assist us in conducting a bird walk that would be great!

CONSERVATION (TANGLE TAINERS)

The ASCR has set up container for fishermen to collect wastes from fishing to decrease instances of birds get trapped by fishing lines. Our volunteers Eric and Fred collect the content of these containers on a regular basis. If you would like to help them for the maintenance or help set up more containers, we would love to have you!

NEST BOX BUILDING

In 2020, this long-standing program took a back burner. We have drafted an action plan to build nest boxes for Eastern Bluebirds through workshops with children and families in 2021 (dependent upon COVID 19 regulations for public gatherings). No woodworking skills are needed. This position focuses on coordinating the program. We will train!

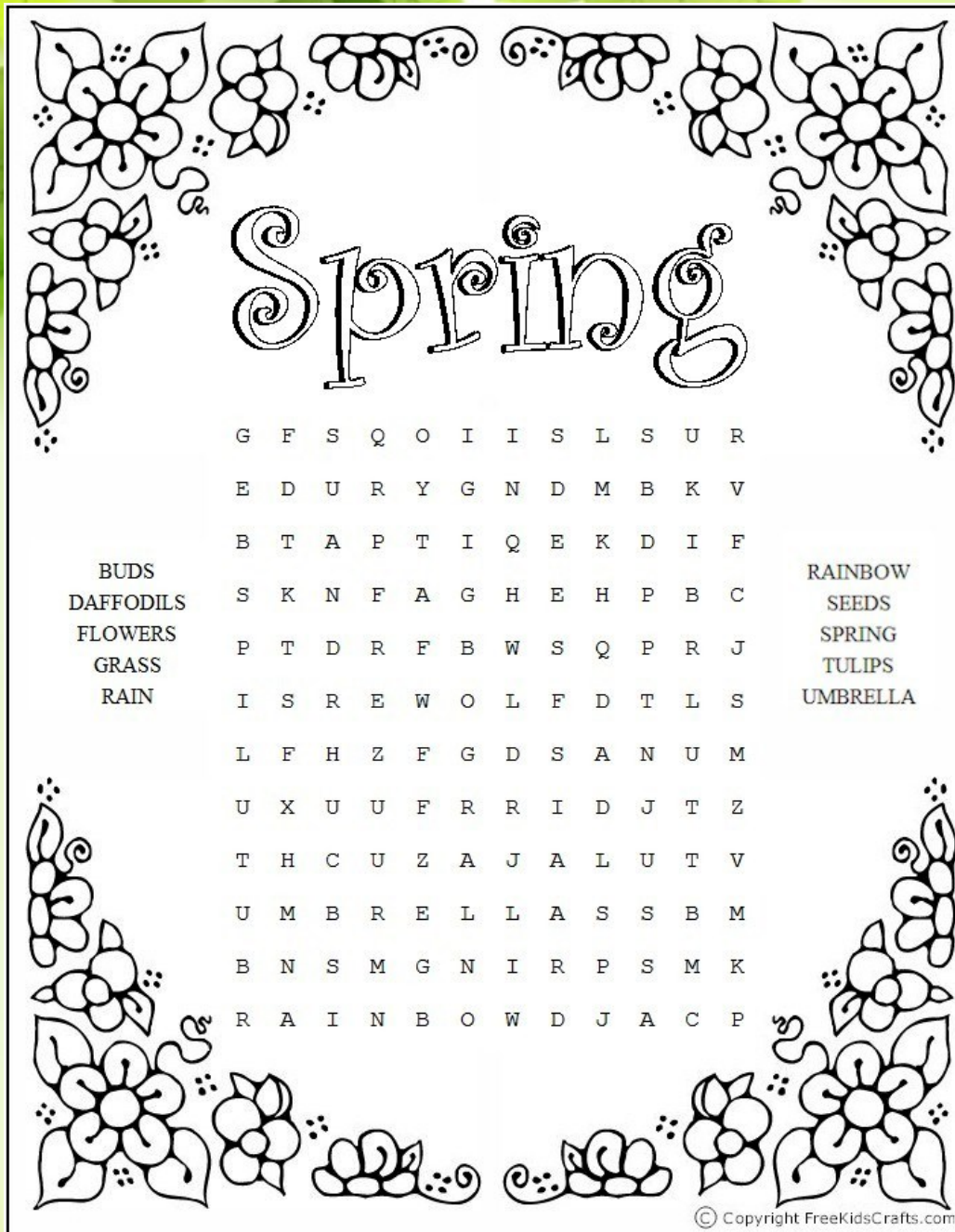
Message us at

info@capitalregionaudubon.org

if you're interested in learning more!



ACTIVITIES



Did You Know?



PC: Fernando Burgalin / Macaulay Library

The oldest known Wood Thrush was a male and at least 10 years, 2 months old when he was recaptured and rereleased during banding operations in Connecticut in 2010. He had been banded in the same state in 2002.

- allaboutbirds.org



Search for the words and then color the page! Words can be in any direction.
Good luck!



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: Vacant
Correspondence Officer: Fred Bockis
Treasurer: René Facchetti, Krista Galliher
Recording Officer: Lindsay Homenick

Directors

Jennifer Ford
Eric Latini

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 this chapter for the year.

Please join us!

Email
President@CapitalRegionAudubon.org
for more information!

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

Questions?

Email: info@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. 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!!