



# WINGBEATS

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

## -Summer 2021-

### Fall Bird Walk Planned

Even though we do not have a firm date for a fall bird walk, there is one in the planning stages. Information will be posted on our website and in the September *Wingbeats* as it becomes available. Any questions should be directed to [info@capitalregionaudubon.org](mailto:info@capitalregionaudubon.org) or [president@capitalregionaudubon.org](mailto:president@capitalregionaudubon.org).

Please be mindful that current social-distancing and face mask guidelines will be followed at all walks and gatherings. Hand sanitizer is recommended, but not required. A few pair of binoculars will be available to borrow if needed.

Suggestions for future walks are always welcome. Details for this and all walks will be posted on our website (<https://www.capitalregionaudubon.org/>) and Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/theASCR>).



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### Baby Birds/Fledglings

*Contributed by Eric Latini*

At some point, nearly everyone who spends time outdoors finds a baby bird—one that is unable to fly well and seems lost or abandoned. Your first impulse may be to help the young bird, but in the great majority of cases the young bird doesn't need help. In fact, intervening often makes the situation worse. Here's how to determine whether to take action:

The first thing to do is to figure out if the baby bird is a nestling or a fledgling.

Most of the baby birds people find are fledglings. These are young birds that have just left the nest, and can't fly yet, but are still under the care of their parents, and do not need our help.

Fledglings are feathered and capable of hopping or flitting, with toes that can tightly grip your finger or a twig. These youngsters are generally adorable and fluffy, with a tiny stub of a tail.

When fledglings leave their nest they rarely return, so even if you see the nest it's not a good idea to put the bird back in—it will hop right back out. Usually there is no reason to intervene at all beyond putting the bird on a nearby perch out of harm's way and keeping pets indoors. The parents may be attending to four or five



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## Anaplasmosis—Tickborne Disease

*Contributed by Carol Quantock*

More than ever, we need to be aware of the diseases that tick bites can cause. Because of the warmer winter temperatures brought on by climate change, ticks are active all year round. One of the most serious is anaplasmosis.

Anaplasmosis is a disease caused by the bacterium *Anaplasma phagocytophilum*. These bacteria are spread to people by tick bites primarily from the black-legged tick (*Ixodes scapularis*) and the western black-legged tick (*Ixodes pacificus*). Anaplasmosis is most commonly reported in the Northeastern and upper Midwestern states.

People with anaplasmosis will often have fever, headache, chills, and muscle aches. Doxycycline is the drug of choice for adults and children of all ages with anaplasmosis.

Signs and symptoms of anaplasmosis typically begin within 1–2 weeks after the bite of an infected tick.

Early signs and symptoms (days 1-5) are usually mild or moderate and may include fever, chills, severe headache, muscle aches, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and loss of appetite.

Rarely, if treatment is delayed or if there are other medical conditions present, anaplasmosis can cause severe illness. Prompt treatment can reduce your risk of developing severe illness..

Signs and symptoms of severe (late stage) illness can include respiratory failure, bleeding problems, organ failure, and death.

People with weakened immune systems (such as those receiving some cancer treatments, individuals with advanced HIV infection, prior organ transplants, or people taking some medications) are at risk for severe illness.

Early treatment with the antibiotic doxycycline can prevent death and severe illness. Doxycycline is the recommended treatment for anaplasmosis in adults and children of all ages. For more information go to <https://www.cdc.gov/anaplasmosis/index.html#:~:text=Anaplasmosis%20is%20a%20disease%20caused,%2C%20chills%2C%20and%20muscle%20aches>.



## Baby Birds

*(Continued from Page 1)*

young scattered in different directions, but they will return to care for the one you have found. You can watch from a distance to make sure the parents are returning to care for the fledgling.

If the baby bird is sparsely feathered and not capable of hopping, walking, flitting, or gripping tightly to your finger, it's a nestling. If so, the nest is almost certainly nearby. If you can find the nest (it may be well hidden), put the bird back as quickly as possible. Don't worry—parent birds do not recognize their young by smell. They will not abandon a baby if it has been touched by humans. If the nest has been destroyed you can make a new one, place the chick back inside and watch to see if the parents come back.

If you have found both parents dead, the young bird is injured, you can't find the nest, or are absolutely certain that the bird was orphaned, then your best course of action is to bring it to a wildlife rehabilitator. You can find one by doing a Google search for your state and "wildlife rehabilitation."

The Humane Society of the United States also has a page to help you locate a wildlife rehabilitator in your state. A sick, injured or orphaned baby bird may need emergency care until you can get it to a wildlife rehabilitator.

Bottom line: remember that the vast majority of "abandoned" baby birds are perfectly healthy fledglings whose parents are nearby and watching out for them.

Source: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/i-found-a-baby-bird-what-do-i-do/>



# Cockatoos Master Dumpster Diving

by Christina Larson, Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A few years ago, a Sydney scientist noticed a sulfur-crested cockatoo opening his trash bin. Not every resident would be thrilled, but ornithologist Richard Major was impressed by the ingenuity.

It's quite a feat for a bird to grasp a bin lid with its beak, pry it open, then shuffle far enough along the bin's edge that the lid falls backward— revealing edible trash treasures inside.

Intrigued, Major teamed up with researchers in Germany to study how many cockatoos learned this trick. In early 2018, they found from a survey of residents that birds in three Sydney suburbs had mastered the novel foraging technique. By the end of 2019, birds were lifting bins in 44 suburbs.

“From three suburbs to 44 in two years is a pretty rapid spread,” said Major, who is based at the Australian Museum.

The researchers' next question was whether the cockatoos had each figured out how to do this alone — or whether they copied the strategy from experienced birds. And their research published Thursday in the journal *Science* concluded the birds mostly learned by watching their peers.

“That spread wasn't just popping up randomly. It started in southern suburbs and radiated outwards,” said Major. Basically, it caught on like a hot dance move.

Scientists have documented other examples of social learning in birds. One classic case involves small birds called blue tits that learned to puncture foil lids of milk bottles in the United Kingdom starting in the 1920s — a crafty move, though less complex and physically demanding than opening trash bins.

But observing a new “cultural trend” spreading in the wild — or suburbs — in real time afforded the cockatoo researchers a special opportunity, said Lucy Aplin, a cognitive ecologist at Max Planck Institute of Animal Behavioral in Germany and co-author of the study. “This is a scientist's dream,” she said.

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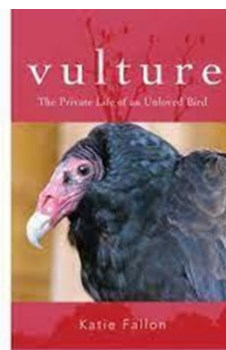
During summer of 2019, trash-collection day in suburban Sydney was the team's research day. As garbage trucks rolled down their routes and people shoved bins to the curb, Max Planck Institute behavioral ecologist Barbara Klump drove around and stopped to record cockatoos landing on bins. Not all cockatoos succeeded in opening them, but she took around 160 videos of victorious efforts.

Analyzing the footage, Klump realized the vast majority of birds opening bins were males, which tend to be larger than females. The birds that mastered the trick also tended to be dominant in social hierarchies.

## Summer Book Review

### Vulture: The Private Life of an Unloved Bird

by Katie Fallon



When I first came across this book, I was less than enthused. Vultures? Do I really want to spend my time reading about them? But I gave it a shot, and I am so glad I did.

It turns out that Vultures are incredibly fascinating birds, and author Katie Fallon does a wonderful job of introducing us to them. Fallon covers the biology, mythology, ties to human history, migration, and natural history of Vultures. While the book focuses more on Black and Turkey Vultures, she also covers California Condors and Vultures found on other continents.

While this is full of information, this book does not read like a textbook. It reads like a story that you don't want to put down. In addition to scientific studies and interviews with scientists, Fallon includes her own adventures and encounters with Vultures. By the end of the first page, I was hooked. By the end of the book, I knew I would never look at Vultures the same way again. They are truly amazing birds, and I am so glad I was able to learn more about them.

-Jennifer Ford





# Mysterious Bird-Killing Illness Spreads to More Mid-Atlantic States

By [David Kindy](#), [smithsonianmag.com](#) July 16, 2021

When Brian Evans heard about young birds dying at a high rate this spring, he dismissed it. The bird ecologist at the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center in Washington, D.C., knew most hatchlings don't survive to their first year, he tells [Natasha Daly](#) of [National Geographic](#). However, Evans took notice when a neighbor told him about a sick bird she had seen. It looked like it was blind, shaking and non-responsive. Something clicked when he heard her description. "That's not your typical dying fledgling," he tells [National Geographic](#).

Evans was correct. What his neighbor witnessed was the early days of a mysterious disease that has been killing songbirds in several mid-Atlantic states. Now, the illness is spreading to other regions. Scientists in 11 states and Washington, D.C., are trying to determine what is killing thousands of young blue jays, grackles, starlings and robins, as well as other birds. Two weeks ago, the mysterious disease was discovered in [Kentucky](#). On July 15, the [Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife](#) asked residents to peremptorily take down bird feeders and birdbaths, though the illness is not believed to be in New England yet, reports [WWLP Digital First](#).

Little is known about the disease at this stage. Scientists are calling it a "mortality event," when animals die in a short period of time from what appears to be the same cause. Symptoms are similar to *Mycoplasma gallisepticum*, a bacterial infection that sickened house finches with crusty and swollen eyes in the 1990s. However, that illness did not include a neurological component, Evans writes in a report first posted June 29 and updated July 12. "We're seeing birds exhibit distressing symptoms, including problems with their eyes and possibly their nervous systems," he writes. "Many birds have been found blind and/or with crusty eyes. They often appear on the ground, confused, with shaky heads, and are sometimes lethargic or unresponsive."

In addition to Washington, D.C., dead birds with similar symptoms have been discovered in Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, Delaware, New Jersey, Ohio, Tennessee, Florida, Indiana, Pennsylvania and Kentucky. Researchers are baffled by the mystery illness. So far, they have ruled out a number of possibilities, including salmonella, chlamydia, avian influenza, West Nile virus, various herpes viruses and other diseases. Scientists are even investigating if this spring's eruption of 17-year cicadas is related. The insects are known to carry a pathogenic fungus, though no connection has been established with the bird disease. [Allysin Gillet](#), an ornithologist with the [Indiana Department of Natural Resources](#), tells [Bente Bouthier of Indiana Public Media](#). "No direct link has been made between those two," she says. "We're also seeing that the regions that are seeing more reports are a bit outside the range of that Brood X Cicada."

Diagnosing the illness is an involved process. Several state and federal agencies, including [Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study \(SCWDS\)](#) and the [United States Geological Survey's National Wildlife Health Center](#), are working together to solve the mystery. With so many diseases, pathogens, fungus and toxins to consider, there is an endless list to review, [Nicole Nemeth](#) of SCWDS tells [Joanna Thompson of Audubon Magazine](#). "There's really still a lot of possibilities," she says. "Unfortunately, it just takes time." In the meantime, Evans is reaching out to the public for their help. People who find an injured, sick or dead bird are asked to complete a brief [online questionnaire](#) for the [Smithsonian's National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute](#). This data could be crucial in finding a cause. "The information you submit—date, location, bird age, species (if you know it), and a photo—will help us understand the scope of this event," Evans says.

# High Summer Notes

by [Carol Quantock](#)

As I wrote in the Spring newsletter, Upstate New York weather is a rollercoaster. We have experienced an unusually rainy and very humid July, and many local communities were flooded. High winds uprooted trees and caused damage to human dwellings as well as animal and bird habitats. Out West, the tremendous heat waves and wildfires are continuing to devastate the environment. Clearly the Earth's weather patterns have been adversely affected by climate change and we are approaching the "tipping point" far more rapidly than originally thought. However, grassroots groups, national, and international organizations are working hard to educate the public. We must do everything we can to reduce our carbon footprint and work toward mitigating climate change. These changes can begin in your own home.

While we returned to in-person meetings for May and June, we're taking the summer off (no meetings in July and August). Our next monthly meeting will be on Tuesday, September 14 (note that this is a one-time departure from our normal Monday meetings; see page 5 for details).

I hope that you're enjoying your summer and have had a chance to regroup, visit with friends and family, and safely attend public gatherings. Even though the Delta variant of COVID-19 will probably require us to wear masks again, we should be mindful of the fact that wearing them protects ourselves and others.

I encourage you to contact me at [cquantock@nycap.rr.com](mailto:cquantock@nycap.rr.com) with feedback, suggestions for articles, and articles themselves. Contributions are always welcome.

# Get Involved!

After defining our vision, mission statement, and niche, ASCR has 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, 2020 and can be accessed 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](mailto:info@capitalregionaudubon.org) to ask about attending our board meetings.

## **Board Meetings to Resume in September** *Second Monday of every month*

In-person meetings will resume on September 14, 2021 (a Tuesday instead of our usual Monday). We'll be meeting at the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 510 Albany Shaker Road, Loudonville, 12211 at 6:30 PM. CDC guidelines for face masks and social distancing will be followed. 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](mailto:info@capitalregionaudubon.org) for more information.

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

## **AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE CAPITAL REGION CONTINUES TO OFFER BIRD WALKS**

ASCR conducted a successful and fun bird walk at Vischer Ferry on May 22. We will be offering a fall walk (see page 1) and would like to offer more walks and education events for other dates in the fall.

Winter walks are always a possibility: we won't see the variety of species we see in the spring and summer, but owls, eagles, and "winter" passerines are active.

If you are interested in attending or assisting with bird walks or future events, please email [info@capitalregionaudubon.org](mailto:info@capitalregionaudubon.org).

## **BALD EAGLE WATCHERS STILL 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](http://citsci.org)). The data are used by the NYSDEC to help monitor Bald Eagle nests, and success rates, in this area. **The next watch will begin in January 2022 and run through June.**

**Please contact our new Bald Eagle Nest Watch Coordinator, Sean Hogan, at [hogan1858@hotmail.com](mailto:hogan1858@hotmail.com) for more information.**

## **ANNUAL SEED SALE (FALL 2021)**

This event is one of our largest undertakings. Teresa and Fred have been instrumental in coordinating the sale from orders to delivery these  
*(continued on page 6)*

# Get Involved!

*(continued from page 5)*

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. Watch for the order form in the September Wingbeats and on our website.

## **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 in the field to identify birds).

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 continue offering our first-time birders' walks. If you would like to assist us in conducting a bird walk that would be great!

## **CONSERVATION (TANGLE TAINERS)**

The ASCR has set up containers for fishermen to collect wastes from fishing to decrease instances of birds getting 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**

Even though we planned to bring the nest box building program back in 2021, COVID-19 restrictions deferred our plans. We would like to resume this worthwhile program through workshops with children and families as soon as possible. No woodworking skills are needed. This position focuses on coordinating the program.

Message us at  
[info@capitalregionaudubon.org](mailto:info@capitalregionaudubon.org)  
if you're interested in learning more!



# ACTIVITIES







## 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: Krista Galliher  
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!

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### **Questions?**

Email: [info@capitalregionaudubon.org](mailto: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!!