



# Winter 2019 WINGBEATS

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

**Annual Meeting with Guest Dr. John Davis**  
February 23, 2019, 1pm-2:30pm  
Peebles Island State Park

Audubon Society of the Capital Region, cordially invites to you to this year's annual meeting. This meeting is where ASCR presents the sleight of nominees and an election is held for the 2019 season. Afterwards, speaker John Davis will present research on Short Eared Owls and their Habitat Preferences on the Montezuma Wetlands Complex (MWC). Since 2010, wetland and grassland sites within the MWC have been surveyed during the winter for the presence of raptors, including the Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*), a winter visitor classified as endangered in New York State. Aerial imagery and expert knowledge were used to refine and update previous ecological community maps, which were then combined with the raptor survey data and used to evaluate owl habitat use in detail. These results have important implications for habitat management and restoration in the MWC, and at other wetland locations managed for Short Eared Owls.

#### **Slate of Nominees**

**Board of Directors:** Mark Silo, Jennifer Ford, Fred Bockis, Eric Latini  
**Vice President:** Erin Allen  
**Treasurer:** René Facchetti

#### **Returning to the Board**

**President:** Rebecca Allmond

**Open Positions:** Correspondence Officer,  
Recording Officer

## Audubon Since the Landmark Migratory Bird Act

Written by: Mark Silo

In earlier newsletters in 2018 we traced the origins of the Audubon Society and the growth of its influence, culminating in the landmark 1918 Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Below, courtesy of [audubon.org](http://audubon.org), is a snapshot of Audubon highlights in the hundred years that followed the MBTA.

**1923-24** Audubon opens its first sanctuaries: Rainey Sanctuary in Louisiana and Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary in Long Island.

**1934** Roger Tory Peterson's field guide is published, popularizing birding like never before.

**1936** Audubon opens a nature camp on Hog Island, Maine.

**1940** The National Association of Audubon Societies becomes the National Audubon Society.

**1943** The Greenwich Audubon Center in Connecticut opens as Audubon's first nature center.

**1945** Audubon magazine sounds the first alarm about the hazards of DDT. Audubon partners with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the Whooping Crane Project.

**1954** Audubon buys the last great stand of bald cypress trees in Florida's Corkscrew Swamp to create the crown jewel of its sanctuary system.

**1960** The Audubon Society begins documenting the decline of bird species, including Bald Eagles, attributing this to DDT.

**1972** A campaign by the Environmental Defense Fund and the National Audubon Society ends in victory when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency bans the use of the insecticide DDT.

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# Upcoming Events

## Bald Eagle Nest Watch

January - April 2019

Hudson River, Hudson, NY

Come watch bald eagle nests with the Audubon Society of the Capital Region. If you are in the Hudson area and would like to learn more, please contact Jennifer: [info@capitalregionaudubon.org](mailto:info@capitalregionaudubon.org)

## Annual Meeting and Short Eared Owls

**Saturday, February 23, 1pm-2:30pm**

Peebles Island State Park

1 Delaware Ave, Cohoes, NY 12047

Professor John Davis will present Short Eared Owls and the Montezuma Wetlands, as the headliner for this year's Annual Meeting for Audubon Society of the Capital Region. See page 1 for more details!

## Bird Walk! at Albany Rural Cemetery

**April 21, 2018, 7:30am**

Cemetery Ave, Albany, NY 12204

(main entrance is off of route 378 in Menands)

Don't miss this annual spring bird walk in the historic setting of the Albany Rural Cemetery! Join us with local historian Dr. John Pipkin and HMBC bird guide, Tristan Lowry, for an intro to the history of this National Historic Landmark as we to listen and look for birds. Bring binoculars and wear comfortable shoes and clothing. This walk can last up to two hours. Space is limited and *registration* is required! Please call the Albany Rural Cemetery Office at 518- 463-7017 to reserve your spot! A \$10 donation is recommended for the bird walk to support the Friends of Albany Rural Cemetery.



Be sure to check our website for more programs and information!

[www.capitalregionaudubon.org](http://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!!

## “What’d I Miss?”

The 32<sup>nd</sup> Albany County Christmas Bird Count, held on December 16, 2018, resulted in 66 species, including one species new to the count, a Virginia rail! ASCR sponsored 21 people birding in the field and one feeder watcher.. Weather conditions may not have been ideal, with sleet, snow and rain falling during the day, however, field parties persevered! The total number of individual birds, 9772, was down 30% from the year before. Our colder than normal fall weather probably played a role, in addition to the poor weather conditions on count day. Species found in higher than usual numbers include pileated woodpecker, Carolina wren (recovering from a big drop after 2013), and northern cardinal. Species in notably low numbers included Canada goose, eastern bluebird, American robin, American tree sparrow, dark-eyed junco, house finch and American goldfinch. Birds of special note, in addition to the rail, were a long-tailed duck (last seen on the count in 2005), 22 black vultures (the only other record was one bird in 2013), and evening grosbeak (seen during count week, but not on count day). The last record of evening grosbeak for the count was in 1995. Thanks go to our sponsor, the Audubon Society of the Capital Region, and to all the hardy count participants! - Alan Mapes, Count Coordinator

# VOLUNTEER

## Climate Watch Project Participation

Join a national bird survey this winter! Southern Adirondack Audubon Society (SAAS), our sister chapter up north, is seeking 20 volunteers to collect data about birds in our chapter area.

SAAS will participate in National Audubon Society's citizen-science pilot project, Audubon Climate Watch, from Jan. 15 to Feb. 15. The goal of the project is to learn how specific bird species are affected by climate change. The SAAS survey will focus on both Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches.

The survey is conducted twice a year: in June and in the winter. SAAS joined the program in June, 2017.

Volunteers use a specific protocol established by National Audubon: using grid maps of a specific area, birders will conduct 12 counts, observing for five minutes each. They would also record the numbers and species of other birds identified within 100 meters (328 feet).

The Climate Watch project was developed after National Audubon issued a report in 2014, [Birds and Climate Change](#), on risks faced by North American bird species from climate change. As a result of this report, Audubon members asked how they could help. The Audubon Climate Watch program started in 2016, focusing on bluebirds, but SAAS will be focusing on target species, such as the White-breasted and Red-breasted Nuthatches during the winter count. Details about the national program are available at: <http://www.audubon.org/conservation/climate-watch-program>

Contact SAAS board member Rob Snell for more information: [birdbrane1@gmail.com](mailto:birdbrane1@gmail.com)



## Additional Opportunities

### Bald Eagle Nest Watch

Come help monitor a Bald Eagle nest near Hudson, NY. This involves monitoring the nest for at least one hour per week during the nesting season, and submitting data on nest activity.

### Program Chair Needed

We are looking for a highly motivated and creative individual to help get involved with creating and sustaining current programs for ASCR. Minimum commitment is to attend regular board meetings and help coordinate programs for the chapter. Training is provided.

### Bird Walk Leaders desired

Do you know birds in the Capital Region? Do you like people? Would you like to share your knowledge with new and curious birders? Come be a bird walk leader with Audubon!

### Recording Officer Needed

Are you a good note taker? We need you! Commitment is one board meeting per month to take meeting notes and email them to the Board.

**Interested in any of these opportunities?**

**Contact**

**[President@CapitalRegionAudubon.org](mailto:President@CapitalRegionAudubon.org)**



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**1973** Endangered Species Act, considered the nation's toughest wildlife law, is passed, protecting hundreds of threatened and endangered species.

**1980** The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act is passed, protecting 79.5 million acres, including the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

**1984** Audubon starts the popular new children's educational program and publication *Audubon Adventures*.

**1987** Audubon biologists help capture the last wild California Condor, which is placed in a captive breeding program with other survivors.

**1994** The Bald Eagle is down-listed from endangered to threatened.

**1998** Audubon holds its first-ever Great Backyard Bird Count: 14,000 people participate.

**1999** Almost 50,000 participants take part in the 100th Christmas Bird Count, now the longest-running bird survey in the world.

**2000** With Audubon at the forefront, President Bill Clinton authorizes the Everglades Protection and Restoration Act, committing \$7.8 billion.

**2002** Audubon opens its first urban Audubon Center, in Prospect Park, Brooklyn, New York; the center serves 50,000 visitors annually. The last free-flying Californian Condor is released back into the wild with more than 40 others.

**2004** Audubon's science team releases the first "State of the Birds" report, the best data available since Silent Spring to document bird health and habitat.

**2008** Toyota TogetherGreen, Audubon's most ambitious corporate partnership, begins transforming communities and bringing new diversity to conservation.

**2010** Audubon signs a collaborative agreement with Birdlife International.

**2014** Audubon releases its watershed climate report. Based on decades of data, Audubon scientists predict that, by 2080, 314 species will be threatened, endangered, or possibly extinct, due to habitat loss wrought by climate change.

## ASCR 2018 a Year in Review

**Thank you to all of our partners, co-sponsors, volunteers and friends of the Audubon Society of the Capital Region. *We cannot do this without you!***

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 🐦 Mid-Winter Eagle Survey                  | 🐦 Sixth Annual Birdseed Sale and Fundraiser;            |
| 🐦 Annual Meeting                           | 🐦 Audubon Spring Council, Queensbury                    |
| 🐦 Great Backyard Bird Program              | 🐦 Fall Intern - Volunteer Database Development          |
| 🐦 Bird Walk at Albany Rural Cemetery       | 🐦 Audubon Fall Council, Lake Placid                     |
| 🐦 Raptor FEST!                             | 🐦 A Beginner's Christmas Bird Count, Schodack Island SP |
| 🐦 Fourth Bird Blind and Kiosk installation | 🐦 Albany County Christmas Bird Count                    |
| 🐦 Table and Nest Box Workshops             |   |



## ADVOCACY CORNER

### HOW ENORMOUS CORPORATE EFFORTS DEFEATED WASHINGTON STATE CARBON FEE INITIATIVE

- compiled by Mark Silo

On Election Day Washington State voters defeated Initiative 1631. The Initiative, actively supported by Audubon and a coalition of organizations representing working families, communities of color, health professionals, businesses, faith leaders, and tribal nations, would have imposed a fee on energy producers of \$15 per ton of carbon with the fee increasing by \$2 per ton annually until the state's greenhouse gas reduction goals were met. Revenues would have been earmarked for environmental causes. Voters defeated the measure 56.3% to 43.7%.

Over \$46 million was spent by both sides to influence the vote. Audubon has analyzed the sources of funds poured into these efforts. The shocking, but not surprising, results of the analysis show that grassroots, mostly in-state, efforts to pass the initiative were smothered by out-of-state corporate money poured in to ensure its defeat.

Contributions in support of the measure totaled \$15.3 million, of which 53% came from individuals and 61% came from within Washington State. The Nature Conservancy led the way with \$3.4 million. National and state Audubon contributions exceeded \$100,000. 99.99% of funds raised to defeat the measure came from energy companies and non-profits representing the oil and gas industry, refineries, farmers, and manufacturing. 98.3% of these funds originated from outside of Washington.

For further details see: <https://www.audubon.org/news/people-power-vs-corporate-funds-tested-washington-carbon-fee-vote>

## CONSERVATION CORNER

### Great Backyard Bird Count

February 15 - 18, 2019

presented by National Audubon Society

[www.audubon.org/conservation/about-great-backyard-bird-count](http://www.audubon.org/conservation/about-great-backyard-bird-count)

The [Great Backyard Bird Count](http://birdcount.org) (GBBC) is a free, fun, and easy event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of bird populations. Participants are asked to count birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the four-day event and report their sightings online at [birdcount.org](http://birdcount.org). Anyone can take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, from beginning bird watchers to experts, and you can participate from your backyard, or anywhere in the world.

Each checklist submitted during the GBBC helps researchers at the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](http://Cornell Lab of Ornithology) and the [National Audubon Society](http://National Audubon Society) learn more about how birds are doing, and how to protect them and the environment we share.

The 21st annual GBBC will be held Friday, February 15, through Monday, February 18, 2019. Please visit the official website at [birdcount.org](http://birdcount.org) for more information and be sure to check out the latest [educational and promotional resources](#).





**Working Group Descriptions**  
*ASCR is dedicated to the protection and conservation of birds, wildlife and the environment.*

#### **Membership & Volunteers**

Leaders: Fred Bockis & Ryan Henderson  
 Maintain membership records. Recruits and Coordinates volunteers and chapter members for ASCR events and to support the mission of the chapter.

#### **Programs**

Leader: Vacant  
 Coordinates speakers, workshops and other outreach programs to the public.

#### **Conservation & Advocacy**

Leaders: Eric Latini & Mark Silo  
 Oversees conservation projects and initiatives. Reviews, initiates, collaborates in advocacy policies and activities.

#### **Marketing & Communications**

Leader: Rebecca Allmond  
 Publications, chapter member communications and information, advertise events, update social media outlets, photograph events.

#### **Education**

Leader: Vacant  
 Educational programming, Citizen Science initiatives, Christmas Bird Count, etc.

#### **Finance**

Leader: René Facchetti  
 Budgets, fundraising, grant writing.

## **Board members of the Audubon Society of the Capital Region**

*An All Volunteer Chapter Organization of the National Audubon Society*

#### **Officers**

President:	Rebecca Allmond
Vice President:	Erin Allen
Correspondence Officer:	vacant
Treasurer:	René Facchetti
Recording Officer:	vacant

#### **Directors**

Aimee Brunelle  
 Ryan Henderson  
 Eric Latini  
 Mark Silo

WebMaster:	René Facchetti
WebAdmin:	Rebecca Allmond

Board Meetings are the First Thursday of  
 Every Month. **Please join us!**

Email [President@CapitalRegionAudubon.org](mailto:President@CapitalRegionAudubon.org) for  
 more information!

**Audubon Society  
 of the Capital Region**  
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#### **Questions?**

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