



WINGBEATS

Audubon Society of the Capital Region



National Audubon Proposes Radical Chapter Support Reform

The National Audubon Society Ad Hoc Chapter Committee has recently drafted radical recommendations for providing financial and service support to its affiliated local chapters. The draft recommendations, which were distributed to chapter leaders in November for comment, are intended to more effectively achieve the goals of the Audubon network. ASCR members are urged to review the full report at: www.audubon.org/local/cso/adhoccom

The ASCR chapter's board met in November to discuss these draft recommendations in detail and to formulate a chapter response. While the ASCR board welcomes many recommendations related to service support, such as enhancing communication and partnership between and among Audubon's national and state offices and local chapters, ASCR chapter members need to be aware of several bold financial support recommendations, the implementation of which will have serious implications for this chapter.

Historically, funds for chapter operations have come primarily from a "dues share" allocation which the national office kicked back to local chapters, based on chapter membership. Years ago, local

chapters received \$5.50 for each chapter-affiliated Audubon member. In recent years, however, this has been cut to \$2 per member. Under the new recommendations, chapter financial support would be primarily tied to chapter conservation and programmatic accomplishments. Furthermore, operating funds from the national office would be intercepted by state offices. Chapters would then be required to apply to the state office for grants to obtain operating funds for the chapter. For example, ASCR could apply for grant funds based on our active participation in Audubon's IBA program. The state office would then (somehow) determine if this participation is worth \$500, \$1000 or \$1500.

The ASCR board feels that having to apply to the state office for financial support interjects tremendous uncertainty into our chapter budget planning process which would make long range program planning difficult, if not impossible. We need to be able to accurately project our anticipated income over an entire year, so that we know how much money we will have available to commit to our various program initiatives. Any level of fiscal uncertainty would result in holding back on or cutting out programming, which obviously would have a significant negative impact on chapter productivity and achievement.

Shifting the primary criterion for financial support from the discrete and objective number of members affiliated with our chapter to some arcane evaluation of chapter "productivity" introduces onerous new score-keeping burdens on the chapter, as well as on the state office. This proposed regime will require huge new inputs of administrative time and energy, and take valuable attention away from important chapter program activities, ultimately decreasing both the chapter's and the state's capacity to serve as leaders in conservation. It would also seem to lessen chapter incentive for member recruitment and retention.

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Audubon Society of the Capital Region



Cordially Invites You To Attend Our
Year 2005 Programs & Field Trips



Audubon Programs

All Programs To Be Held At:

*William K. Sanford
Colonie Town Library*

Thursday, January 13, 2005, 7:00-9:00 pm

Celebrating the Hudson River:

A Long Paddle

Speaker: Al Mapes

The Great Hudson River Paddle is held each summer to celebrate the improving condition of the Hudson River, and involves a paddle trip from Albany to Manhattan, 145 miles. Alan Mapes took part in the trip by kayak in 2002, and will share the experience through slides and stories.

He will bring the home-made kayak and native Inuit paddles that were used on the trip. Join us for a colorful trip down the Hudson Estuary, the "river that flows two ways".

Thursday, February 10, 2005, 7:00-9:00 pm

Chincoteague:

Natural History of a Barrier Island

Speaker: Bob Budliger

Bob Budliger will present an illustrated talk on the nature of the Virginia barrier island at Chincoteague. He will explore the origins of the island, its history, its plants and animals, and its fabled wild ponies. Bob is the retired Director of Education for the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, and has taught five coastal ecology workshops for Cornell University at the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge.

Refreshments will be served. As always, we encourage you to bring your friends and family. For directions or details, call Greg Rucinski at the Colonie Library at (518) 458-9274.

Thursday, March 10, 2005, 7:00-9:00 pm

The Canadian Atlantic

Speaker: Denise & Scott Stoner

From the Gannets of Bonaventure, the tides of Fundy, and the highlands of Cape Breton, across the sea to the fjords, bogs, and icebergs of Newfoundland and Labrador, this great and diverse land is filled with scenery, wildlife, and culture. This slide and music program shows the wonders that draw visitors again and again to these special places.

Scott is past president of both the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club and the Audubon Society of the Capital Region. Denise is a past officer and director of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club. Together they enjoy exploring, photographing, and sharing the natural history of North America.

Audubon Field Trips

Great Backyard Bird Count

Saturday, February 19: 9:00—10:00 a.m.

Location: 5 Rivers Environmental Center in Delmar

This weekend, birders all over North America will count birds in their yard or local park as part of the Great Backyard Bird Count. Sponsored by the National Audubon Society in cooperation with the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, the GBBC helps track the distribution and abundance of winter birds. Join ASCR president Craig Thompson to monitor bird feeder action from the comfort of Five Rivers' bird watching window, and learn how you too can participate in the GBBC!

Owls You Should Know

Friday, March 11: 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Location: Saratoga National Historic Park

Several owl species call the Capital District home, and, believe it or not, the dead of winter is owl mating season. Join ASCR president Craig Thompson on an outdoor foray at Saratoga NHP to listen for owl courtship calls and learn "who's who". Registration is limited. Please pre-register by Friday, February 25 by calling the Saratoga PLAN office at 518-587-5554. Dress for outdoor winter fun! (Snowshoes recommended if there is snow). Flashlights may be helpful but not necessary. In case of inclement weather this program may be cancelled. If in doubt, call the PLAN office to confirm.

Audubon Reform, continued from Page 1...

The ASCR board is also very concerned with the loss of local ownership which these radical funding recommendations would impose. The ASCR chapter is relatively large, and your board is eager to ensure that we get our fair share of state office financial support. But state office overseers may not wish to sanction traditional ASCR chapter initiatives such as providing a local youth with a campership to a DEC Summer Camp. And there will be temptation to divert funds away from local initiatives which ASCR may judge important and worthy, in order to buttress more favored state initiatives in far-flung locales. All of which would likely require our chapter to more aggressively pursue outside funding opportunities to maintain our local presence, which again would require more volunteer effort and / or take valuable time away from important chapter program activities.

In short, we believe that the most effective way to advance the Audubon cause is to focus squarely on service support issues within the vast Audubon network. Most, if not all, of the barriers to collaborative achievement of Audubon goals are not related to mechanisms of financial support. But if, as it would appear, chapter financial support is to be based on qualitative measures of chapter performance rather than on affiliate membership, the key to our chapter's continued viability, then, will be member involvement.

Yes, the national and state offices must do all they can to keep Audubon's essential grassroots network solvent. But now, each ASCR member must likewise do all they can to help forward our chapter's agenda. Only with your active participation in ASCR conservation, education and advocacy activities will our chapter's fiscal stability be assured. So get involved in our monthly meetings; our chapter field trips; or with a chapter committee; or the chapter board; or bring us your own fresh ideas. Now, as never before, it is up to you. Please review the full report carefully. Your ASCR board members are eager to hear from you about the draft recommendations and our chapter response.



Forestry / Wildlife Manual Now Available



It has been several years in the research and the writing, but now available on the National Audubon Society web site is a version of the training manual for forest landowners, foresters, wildlife biologists and other professionals interested in the relationship between harvest levels and wildlife impacts in the Northern Hardwood forest of New York.

The manual is available for use in training sessions in the coming year. These sessions are being arranged and coordinated by Cornell University Extension Service. The web site address is: www.ny.audubon.org. Follow the one link to the forestry/wildlife manual and then to the full text. For questions about the manual contact Graham Cox, Coordinator of Audubon New York's Forest, Wetland and Open Space Program, at gcox@audubon.org.



From The Editor's Desk

By René Facchetti

Greetings ASCR members and environmentally conscious readers. It is hard for me to imagine that I have been doing the ASCR **Wingbeats** newsletter for now over 15 years. I can attest that we, as a group, have worked diligently over the years to preserve our most precious possession of all—the environment; and have tried to increase your awareness and knowledge of ever challenging events that threaten to destroy both our local and global ecosystems. I am proud to serve on the ASCR board and it is an honor for me to say that I am part of a dynamic team of experienced individuals that dedicate themselves to promoting and maintaining this organization.

I have two items of interest that I would like to report:

- I. As you have probably read, National Audubon has reformed the local chapter dues structure. If you happen to notice on page 1 of **Wingbeats**, this issue run is January — March 2005. In an effort to eliminate printing costs, **Wingbeats** will now be run quarterly rather than bi-monthly as we have done in the past.
- II. Secondly, as a cost savings initiative and more importantly, to help save some trees, I have designed the ASCR web site (www.CapitalRegionAudubon.org) to carry our newsletter in electronic format. On the site, you can sign up to receive newsletter publication notifications via email, then download an electronic version of **Wingbeats** as the new issues become available. You can also opt to not receive the printed paper copy in the mail, thereby saving some paper. You don't have to be a super technical expert to do this. The process is quick and easy to do!

Hope to see you "on-line"!!!



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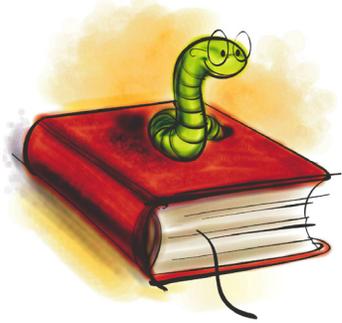
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Audubon NY Revises IBA Book

For the past 2 years, Audubon New York has been undertaking a second round of IBA (Important Bird Area) site identifications. The goals of the second round were to identify new sites that were missed in the first round and to re-evaluate all existing IBAs to make sure that they continue to meet the IBA criteria. It also provided an opportunity to build on the considerable developments in bird conservation that have occurred since 1997. This fall, the IBA technical committee completed the review of all newly proposed and existing IBAs. The list of sites identified as IBAs in NY now includes 136 sites (up from 127). Noteworthy actions taken by the IBA technical committee during the second round include modifications to the IBA criteria to better align our program with the National and Global IBA programs, decisions to combine certain adjacent and/or nested IBAs, and the establishment of a de-listing process to evaluate IBAs that no longer appear to meet IBA criteria. Audubon New York's IBA Program Coordinator Jillian Liner is currently updating site descriptions and conservation information for each of the 136 sites to be included in the second edition of New York's IBA book. Audubon New York plans to announce the revised 2005 list of IBAs in conjunction with the publication of the 2005 IBA book and Audubon's 100th anniversary. You can reach Jillian at jliner@audubon.org or 607-254-2437.



***** For Programs, Field Trip, & Further General Environmental Information, Visit Us on the Internet at:**

www.CapitalRegionAudubon.Org



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