

January - March 2006



ASCR Members Urged to Support Expanded EPF in 2006

New York's Great Natural Heritage depends on you !!!

Representing the environmental high note of the 2005 legislative session, the Governor and the Legislature passed an increase of \$25 million in funding for the State's Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) to \$150 million. Created in 1993, the EPF is a permanent dedicated funding source, financed by a portion of the Real Estate Transfer Fee, for pressing environmental projects that safeguard the environment, protect public health and preserve New York's quality of life for future generations. Appropriations from this fund support a host of critically important initiatives, ranging from clean water, open space, working farms, parks and land stewardship, urban and community forestry, recycling, and public health initiatives including breast cancer research.

Included in the newly expanded EPF were increases in many of the funds categories, including several strongly supported by Audubon New York; \$40 million for land acquisition projects, \$16 million for farmland protection, and \$1 million for the Biodiversity Research Institute. Also included were

the additions of two new categories, \$6 million for the Zoos, Botanical Gardens and Aquaria programs (ZBGA), which provides important funding for environmental education and several Audubon nature centers, and a new \$3 million Quality Communities Grants program which will provide matching grants (85 state / 15 local share) to municipalities to do land use and other planning. This \$25 million increase will surely help preserve and protect birds, other wildlife and their habitats in New York for future generations, but even more can be done in the 2006 Fiscal Year.

As the revenue from the Real Estate Transfer Fee has been increasing exponentially in recent years to now over \$700 million, and as total state spending has grown from \$80 billion to well over \$100 billion, we are now urging New York's leaders to increase the EPF to \$300 million as part of the 2006-2007 State budget. With the costs of protecting the environment ever increasing, this modest increase in EPF funding is critical to ensure that New York continues to invest in open space, clean water, and parkland protection programs for our children and the State's future. However, we need your support to make this happen.

You can help us now by writing to the Governor, your local Assembly member and State Senator thanking them for supporting the \$25 million EPF increase in 2005, and urging them to support an expanded \$300 million EPF in 2006. For more information on how to contact your elected officials, or for a sample letter, please contact Sean Mahar at smahar@audubon.org. *New York's great natural heritage depends on you!*

In This Issue ...

2006 Programs & Field Trips	2
2006 ASCR Annual Meeting	3
ASCR Christmas Bird Count	3
Environmental Announcements	4

Audubon Society of the Capital Region

**Cordially Invites You To Attend Our
Year 2006 Programs & Field Trips**

Audubon Programs

All Programs To Be Held At:

*William K. Sanford
Colonie Town Library*

Thursday, January 12, 2006, 7:00-9:00 pm

Biology and Conservation of the Timber Rattlesnake

**Speaker: Dr. William S. Brown, Associate
Professor Emeritus / Skidmore College**

With a range that extends from the Mississippi Valley to the east coast, and from the Gulf coast to the northern border with Canada, the Timber Rattlesnake is the most widely distributed rattlesnake of the Eastern Deciduous Forest biome. Since 1978, Dr. William S. Brown has been studying Timber Rattlesnakes in the southeastern Adirondacks. Join us for an overview of the basic biology of *Crotalus horridus*, and an in-depth look at the ecological factors that influence rattlesnake conservation, such as landscape and habitat integrity, prey availability and body condition, and life history and population viability.

Thursday, February 9, 2006, 7:00-9:00 pm

Touring South-Central Alaska

Speaker: Gregg Recer

Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club member and past president Gregg Recer will present an eye-popping pictorial of his family's recent adventure exploring a small slice of our largest state. From Denali National Park and Preserve south to the Kenai Peninsula, they experienced habitats ranging from alpine tundra and boreal forest to tidewater glaciers, rugged coastline and the Pacific Ocean. Join us for a celebration of Alaska's vast diversity of parks, landscapes and wildlife featuring mountain and coastal scenery, grizzlies, whales and seabirds. This meeting is designated as the chapter's Annual Meeting.

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.

...Continued

Thursday, March 9, 2006, 7:00-9:00 pm

New York's Dragonfly & Damselfly Project

Speaker: Audubon NY Staff

This spring, Audubon New York will be cooperating with the New York Natural Heritage Program in an ambitious project to inventory dragonfly and damselfly populations throughout New York State. The current state-wide distribution of these fascinating insects is poorly understood and Audubon New York, through its strong grass-roots network, will be playing a pivotal role in collecting data for this project. Come learn about these amazing insects and find out how you can get involved in this exciting citizen science initiative.

Audubon Field Trips

Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)

At 5 Rivers Environmental Center in Delmar

Saturday, February 18, 2006:

9:00 a.m. —10:00 a.m.

On 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 tracks the distribution and abundance of winter birds. Join ASCR president Craig Thompson to monitor activity at Five Rivers' bird feeders from the comfort of the bird watching window. We'll apply the fun and simple GBBC protocols that you too can use to participate in the GBBC at home!



2006 ASCR Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of ASCR Members will be held Thursday, February 9, 2006, 7:00-9:00PM at the William K. Sanford Library, Colonie. The members will consider and act upon the election of chapter officers.

The Chapter Nominating Committee has determined to present for re-election the entire slate of current office-holders, as follows: For President, Craig D. Thompson; for Vice President, Graham Cox; for Secretary, David Gibson; and for Treasurer, Louise DeSormeau.

Membership participation in this election is critical to the continued growth and development of the chapter. Members in good standing as of January 1, 2006 are entitled to vote either in person or by proxy. To use proxy options, simply sign, date and mail with postage this proxy card to the chapter address on this newsletter, or e-mail *president@capitalregionaudubon.org*, making sure to include your name exactly as it appears on this

mailing. Proxy responses must be received by close of business Wednesday, February 8.

I, the undersigned, a member of ASCR in good standing, hereby appoint Craig Thompson, Graham Cox and David Gibson as my agents to vote as my proxy at the above-referenced meeting and at any adjourned meeting thereof as follows (Check # 1 or 2) :

1. ☐ Cast my vote for all nominees as listed.
2. ☐ Cast my vote for all such nominees, except:

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

Sign Here: _____

Christmas Bird Counts

ASCR sponsored 2 Christmas bird counts within the Capital Region. The Saratoga County Count was held on Saturday, December 17. For count results, call Saratoga Count Coordinator Larry Rowland at 377-3959.

The Albany County Count was conducted on Sunday, December 18. For count results, call Albany Count Coordinator Alan Mapes at 439-4086.

A citizen science initiative older than the Audubon Society itself, the Christmas Bird Count has, over the past 102 years, built an important scientific record entirely thru volunteer effort. Last year, counts were conducted in all 50 states and many US territories. Go to: <http://www.nybirds.org/ProjCBC.htm> for information on other Christmas Bird Counts in New York State.

Thompson Tapped for Council

At the annual Audubon Council of New York State meeting in October, ASCR President Craig Thompson was appointed to the Audubon Council, filling the unexpired term of former Council member Bob Budliger. Thompson, who began his environmental education career as a staff naturalist with Audubon's Jamestown (NY) Audubon Center in 1977, noted that "though it will be impossible to fill Bob's shoes, I am honored to have such an exceptional opportunity to give back to the Audubon cause, and I look forward to working with chapter leaders throughout New York State in forwarding Audubon New York's ambitious agenda".

OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

President: Craig Thompson
508B Stanton Road
Coeymans Hollow, NY 12046
(518) 756-3610 (home)
cdthomps@gw.dec.state.ny.us

Vice:
President: Graham Cox
18A Michael Terrace
Albany, NY 12203
(518) 456-1489 (home)
gcox@audubon.org

Secretary: David Gibson
107 Longkill Road
Ballston Lake, NY 12019
(518) 877-8678 (home)
(518) 377-1452 (work)

Treasurer: Louise Desormeau
P.O. Box 11654
Albany, NY 12211
(518) 786-0805 (home)
auntlousd@aol.com

DIRECTORS

Sue Adair
107 Fox Run Drive
Schenectady, NY 12303
(518) 355-8008 (home)
adair@nycap.rr.com

René Facchetti
1392 Delaware Turnpike
Delmar, NY 12054
(518) 768-4630 (home)
ryf@nycap.rr.com

Andrew Mackie
159 Schoolhouse Road
Albany, NY 12203
(518) 869-9731 (work)
amackie@audubon.org

Frank Murphy
7 Finch Court
Rensselaer, NY 12144
(518) 577-8005
thrush@nycap.rr.com

Jane Graves
PO Box 494
Slingerlands, NY 12159
jgraves@skidmore.edu

Erin Willsey
182 Stage Road
Box 290B
East Berne, NY 12059

COMMITTEES

Conservation: David Gibson
(518) 877-8678 (home)

Education: Erin Willsey

Programs: Scott Stoner—Co Chair
(518) 785-6760 (home)
Robert Budliger—Co-Chair
(518) 439-0006 (home)

Field Trips: Craig Thompson
(518) 756-3610 (home)

Membership: Louise Desormeau
(518) 786-0805 (home)

Publicity: Sam Katz
(518) 372-8412 (home)

Editor of Wingbeats /
Webmaster: René Facchetti
(518) 768-4630 (home)
ryf@nycap.rr.com



Environmental Announcements

Spring Audubon Council Meeting

ASCR members are cordially invited to participate in the Spring Audubon Council of New York State meeting, which will take place Friday, March 24 - Sunday, March 26 at the Gideon Putnam in Saratoga Springs. For more info, contact Audubon NY at 869-9731 or www.ny.audubon.org

ASCR Annual Report Available On-line

What has the chapter been up to lately? Check out www.capitalregionaudubon.org to review ASCR's ambitious 2005-06 Annual Plan, a recap of last year's achievements in ASCR's 2004-05 Annual Report, and other chapter-related info.

Natural History Conference Scheduled

The Northeast Natural History Conference will be held at the Empire State Plaza Convention Center on April 20-21. Organized by the New York State Biodiversity Research Institute, this biennial conference will include paper and poster sessions, an illustrators' gallery, booksellers, a keynote speaker, and a banquet. For more information, go to www.nysm.nysed.gov/nhc

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



**Audubon Society
of the Capital Region, Inc.
P.O. Box 11654
Albany, NY 12211**

☒ **Return Service Requested**

Printed on Recycled Paper



Pre-Sort Std.
US Postage
Paid
Albany, NY
Permit # 881

**DATED PROGRAM
PLEASE EXPEDITE**