

The Fledgling

Newsletter of the Southern Adirondack Audubon Society, Inc.
www.southernadirondackaudubon.org

Vol. 28 No. 4

June 2011 – August 2011

President's Message

Isn't spring wonderful? The snow is gone, the rains are over at least for a while, and the birds are back. For Southern Adirondack Audubon, this has been the spring of nest boxes and nesting birds. Last year we put up 10 Kestrel boxes and so far this year we have Kestrels nesting in one of them. Two more boxes have Kestrels flying around and checking them out, but not yet nesting. And as you read the article on page 5, you'll see how busy we've been with bluebird boxes. Ten new Wood Duck boxes have also been installed at Carter's Pond Wildlife Management Area.

Nest boxes are a great way to help birds. In trying to understand the causes of and solutions for species declines, monitoring of nest boxes is crucial. Funded by the National Science Foundation, Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center have developed a nest-monitoring project, NestWatch. NestWatch provides a unified nest-monitoring program to track reproductive success for all North American breeding birds. They supply a continent-wide database that tracks the survival and reproductive success of a wide range of species. It is also important to collect data from open nests, too. Many species do not use boxes and you don't have to go far to find them. So, even if you don't have nest boxes, you could look around for other types of nests and help expand the NestWatch database. Be sure to follow the nest monitoring protocol described on the NestWatch website, www.nestwatch.org. I think you'll be surprised at how easy and fun it is to monitor nests and nest boxes and contribute to the efforts of the national NestWatch program.

Last year at this time, we were all watching in horror when the BP Deepwater Horizon spilled 4.9 million barrels of crude oil into the Gulf of Mexico. Oil washed ashore across hundreds of miles of America's Gulf Coast, and even more sank to the bottom of the gulf where it will continue to harm wildlife and intricate

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Our public programs are held at the Crandall Library in Glens Falls. Enter at the Glen St. entrance, and take the elevator to the lower level; the media room is on the left.

In case of inclement weather, please call the Crandall Library at 792-6508.

Wednesday, June 22 7 p.m.

**"Mercury and Migration:
Conservation through the Lives of
Adirondack Loons"
with Dr. Nina Schoch**

As in recent years, we will host an informal potluck supper prior to this June program. If you wish to join us – and we hope you will – please arrive at 6:00 p.m. and bring a food item to share.

Cold items or desserts are preferable. We will provide cups, napkins, plates, and eating utensils, as well as cold beverages.

**July and August
No Public Programs**

food webs for decades to come. Congress must act now to ensure that adequate resources are made available to restore the Gulf coast habitats. Currently there are several legislative proposals in the House that will direct Clean Water Act penalty funds to Gulf restoration. National Audubon has asked all members to contact their representatives to urge them to pass legislation dedicating BP's Clean Water Act penalties to environmental restoration of the vibrant and vital Gulf Coast. Many who attended our May program took postcards to mail to our senators advocating the passage of such legislation. You can do the same by logging on to www.AudubonAction.org/Spillbill where you will find more information about this urgent request.

Pat Fitzgerald, President

Conservation Updates

Hydraulic Fracturing in New York State

Hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking, has the potential to fragment over 10,000 acres and consume billions of gallons of water. SAAS has submitted comments on the Delaware Regional Basin Commission's (DRBC) Draft Natural Gas Development Regulation. We urged the DRBC to increase regulations concerning habitat of threatened and endangered species, monitoring of flowback water when re-used at sites outside of the Basin, and other accountability measures. To see the letter submitted, visit www.southernadironackaudubon.org/conservation.html

SAAS Opposed HR1, Federal Legislation that Devastates Conservation Funding

SAAS has rallied with 321 Audubon chapters across the country to voice its opposition to HR1. This federal legislation would slash funding to programs that help provide clean air, clean water, and vital natural areas for birds, wildlife, and people. This bill would cut 90% of funding to the Land and Water Conservation Fund (which protects National Wildlife Refuges, Parks, and Forests), eliminate the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund (a critical program that preserves wetlands across the country), and remove federal funding to State Wildlife Grants (these grants help states cost-share many conservation activities). To read the collaborative letter from all the chapters that voiced their opposition to this bill, visit www.southernadironackaudubon.org/conservation.

Jason Goldsmith

Please Do Not Mow Down Milkweed!



The larvae (caterpillars) of monarch butterflies eat ONLY milkweed. This is why the Monarch butterfly is dubbed the 'milkweed butterfly'. The

larvae stage is the only stage of the Monarch butterfly that feeds on milkweed; there is something in milkweed that allows the caterpillar to grow and keep all of the vitamins needed to transform into a beautiful butterfly.

This time of year, Common Milkweed is growing alongside highways, driveways, and sidewalks. Many people think it is unsightly and mow it down. However, the Monarch butterfly lays its eggs on the underside of the milkweed leaves so that the larvae will be able to eat when the eggs hatch. Mowing down the milkweed removes not only the eggs and larvae, but also the only food source of the treasured Monarch larvae. Please don't mow it down



Membership Corner

By Majken Sellar

Welcome to new chapter supporters!

As of May 1, we have 106 chapter supporters. Our most recent new chapter supporters are:

<i>Betsy Birchenough</i>	<i>Cleverdale</i>
<i>Fran Matthews</i>	<i>Wilton</i>
<i>Susan Finch</i>	<i>Hudson Falls</i>
<i>Diane Holsinger</i>	<i>Timberville, VA</i>
<i>Beth LaPan</i>	<i>Fort Edward</i>

Membership runs from January through December. Believe it or not, we are still receiving renewals from January. We accept membership renewals anytime you would like to send them in, so if you have not renewed yet, there is no time like the present! A special thanks to all of you who have renewed your memberships.

We would also like to thank those who sent additional funds to support the local chapter when renewing their memberships.

<i>Ramona Bearor</i>	<i>Joan Robertson</i>
<i>Michelle Michner</i>	<i>Barbara Beatty</i>
<i>Marcia Stout-Roche</i>	<i>Jim Reis</i>

Annual dues of \$10.00 may be sent to:
Majken Sellar, 9 Allen Rd. Ext., Argyle, NY 12809

New chapter supporters who attend a public program, or go on a chapter-sponsored field trip can take advantage of a special offer of one year membership for \$5.00. Checks or money orders should be made out to SAAS.

Summer Field Trip Schedule

Saturday, June 11 – 10 a.m.

Nature Walk with Drew Monthie

Join us for a nature walk with naturalist Drew Monthie. We will look for local wildflowers and listen for the birds while walking at Cole's Woods in Queensbury. Meet at the back entrance by the Mall. For directions, call Pat at 792-6846.

Sunday, June 12 – 8 a.m.

Fort Edward Grassland IBA

Sponsored by the Friends of the Fort Edwards Grassland IBA and the Glens Falls – Saratoga Chapter of ADK/Adirondack Mountain Club

Leader: Laurie LaFond

Co-Leader: Rich Speidel

Look for grassland birds and spring migrants in the Washington County Grasslands Important Bird Area (IBA). This trip combines an auto loop around the heart of the IBA with a short trail hike through the gently rolling rural landscape. Likely sightings include American Kestrels, Bobolinks, Red-tailed Hawks, bluebirds, mockingbirds, woodpeckers, and many other songbirds. Possible sightings include threatened Northern Harriers, Eastern Meadowlarks, and other hawks. Please bring binoculars and take necessary precautions for tick bite prevention and sun protection. Group size is limited to 15, so please call Rich to register at 623-2587.

Saturday, June 18 8 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Hudson Falls

Join trip leader Pat Walters on the towpath in Hudson Falls to look and listen for the spring birds. Call Pat to register at 932-3320.

Friday, July 1 – 9 a.m.

Monthly Coffee Walks at the Betar Byway

Birding walks led by members of Southern Adirondack Audubon will be held the first Friday of every month at 9 a.m. We will meet at the gazebo near the parking lot at the end of First Street in South Glens Falls. In case of inclement weather, please call 793-1960.

Saturday, July 16 – 8 a.m.

Moreau Lake State Park

Visit the backside of Moreau Lake State Park for a bird and nature walk with leaders Sue Pierce, Jim Reis, and Pat Fitzgerald. Call Sue (798-2051) for directions and information about carpooling.

Friday, August 5 – 9 a.m.

Monthly Coffee Walks at the Betar Byway

Birding walks led by members of Southern Adirondack Audubon will be held the first Friday of every month. Each will last about one and a half hours. We will meet at 9 a.m. at the gazebo near the parking lot at the end of First Street in South Glens Falls. In case of inclement weather, please call 793-1960.

Saturday, August 13 12 p.m. – 5 p.m.

Visit our table at **MOREAU FUN DAYS** at the *MOREAU RECREATION PARK* in South Glens Falls. This is a free family event with lots of activities and booths with fireworks Saturday night.

Wood Duck Boxes at Carter's Pond Wildlife Management Area

Our chapter recently partnered with New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and the Waterfowl Improvement Association (WIA) to provide Wood Duck nest boxes at the state-owned Carter's Pond Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Greenwich. Carter's Pond is designated an Important Bird Area by Audubon New York and a Bird Conservation Area by NYSDEC.

Boxes around the periphery of the lake have been in a state of disrepair for some time, so they needed to be replaced. Local decoy company, Dux' Dekes of Greenwich, generously supplied the lumber, the Waterfowl Improvement Association supplied hardware, and the Greenwich tech class constructed the boxes. SAAS then purchased 10 new boxes for this project for \$20 each.

On Saturday, April 9, members of the three organizations met to install the boxes. In addition to SAAS member Mona Bearor, the work crew consisted of DEC field technician, Evan Wills, and WIA members Jeff Duxbury, owner of Dux' Dekes, Jeff's son Nate, and Dan Spigner, also of the WIA,



with his son Kiernan.

Jeff Duxbury of the WIA and Evan Wills of DEC erecting a nest box at Carter's Pond WMA in April of 2011.

Many Wood Ducks were seen and heard as the work was completed and, thanks to the late arrival of spring, the boxes were placed in time for this year's nesting season.

Mona Bearor

Thank You from SAAS

Thanks to the following volunteers who helped with the winter raptor monitoring in the Ft. Edward Important Bird Area.

Sue Adair	Heather Mackey
John Adair	Laura McCarthy
Mona Bearor	Rich Merritt
Andrea Bello	Steve Mesick
Lindsey Duval	Jim Ries
Pat Fitzgerald	Sue Stewart
Jason Goldsmith	Pat Walters
Honey Hollen	

The valuable data collected will note population trends and help future land conservation.

It's time to start thinking about the spring breeding bird survey. For information, contact Jason at 480-4243 or adk_wild_jay@yahoo.com.



**Mark your Calendars
for
Local Natural History,
Ecology and Animal
Tracking Workshop**

Vince Walsh of *Kawing Crow Awareness Center* (KCAC) and *Southern Adirondack Audubon Society* will be holding a workshop focusing on North East native animals, ecology, and animal tracking on October 8 at the Kawing Crow Awareness Center in Greenfield. The day will begin with a tour of KCAC's extensive natural history collection, including over 40 full animal mounts, skins, skulls, scats and plaster casts of tracks. We will then move outside for field time to visit different habitats and look for animal signs. More information will be available in the September issue of *The Fledgling*.

BLUEBIRD NESTBOX BUILDING BLITZ!

The Eastern Bluebird is New York State's official bird. Once declining in population, bluebirds are making a comeback. Numbers declined in part from nest competition with House Sparrows and European Starlings. Use of harmful pesticides and loss of habitat are other factors. According to the North American Bluebird Society, the future can still be promising for the bluebird. The most important step we can take to help them is to provide nesting sites by setting out a box, or starting a bluebird trail.

Thanks to students in Patrick Boire's Tech Student Association at Bolton Central School a whopping 75 bluebird nest boxes were constructed for Southern Adirondack Audubon Society. Six 9th and 10th grade students cut, drilled, and assembled the rough wood boxes for the bargain rate of \$2.00 each.



Photo by Pat Boire

Once the bluebird boxes were assembled, it was time to find homes for all of them. The boxes are being placed in suitable habitat within our chapter, and will be monitored weekly to be sure that House Sparrows and European Starlings are not using them. Many thanks to all who helped in locating proper habitat, installing the boxes, and continuing to monitor them. Linda White is using many boxes to replace those in disrepair at Saratoga National Historic Park. Russell Guard, Kathy Linker, Irene Jurek, and Tina Facticeau of the New York

State Bluebird Society helped in placing several boxes at the Washington County Fair Grounds, Hudson Pointe Nature Trails in Queensbury, and in Saratoga Springs. Licia Mackey, Mona Bearor, Kathy Sweet, and Laurie LaFond found homes and monitors for some boxes in their neighborhoods.



Photo by Don Polunci

Volunteers, especially from the Hudson Falls area, are still needed to monitor some of the bluebird boxes. Monitoring takes only a few minutes once a week. Training will be provided. Watch the fledglings grow and take flight. For more information, call Pat at 792-6846.

Nan Polunci and Pat Fitzgerald

Spring Field Trip Reports

This spring we sponsored several field trips. Reports of two follow, one an early spring birding outing and the other a nature walk in Skidmore Woods.

Hudson River Waterfowl

Sunday, March 20

Leaders: Joyce Miller & Mona Bearor

Seven birders were anxious to see waterfowl and new arrivals on this first day of spring. It was sunny with almost no wind, which made birding a joy.

In addition to the expected species - Ring-necked Ducks, American Black Ducks, Common Goldeneyes, Hooded and Common Mergansers, Mallards, and Canada Geese – everyone was pleased to see American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Wood Duck, Greater Scaup, Bufflehead, and Ruddy Duck - just three females of this last species, no males. There was great interest in the flock of 35+ Double-crested Cormorants as they approached over the river, and we welcomed the Tree Swallows working their way north, as well.

Horned Grebes were a highlight of the trip; everyone caught a glimpse of a molting bird in one spot, and at another we saw an adult in breeding plumage through the scope.

Robins were bobbing along everywhere, Song Sparrows were vocal all along the route, and a single Carolina Wren was belting out its “teakettle” song in one spot. A single Brown-headed Cowbird was claiming his territory, and the expected songbirds were either seen or heard.

Although it appeared that snowmelt and warm temperatures were lagging behind prior years, there was still a nice diversity of species to be found on this route. Everyone enjoyed the sights and sounds of the birds on this lovely day.

Mona Bearor

Skidmore Woods Nature Walk

Saturday, May 14

Leader: Jackie Donnelly

We were lucky the rain held off until mid-afternoon today, giving us time for three distinct botanical adventures. The first was a wildflower walk I led through the Skidmore Woods this morning, sponsored by the local Audubon chapter. I was a bit concerned that participants might be disappointed not to find such showy spring ephemerals as Bloodroot, Hepatica, and Trout Lily (now long gone), but I shouldn't have worried. There's always SOMETHING worth seeing in the woods, such as that lovely trillium pictured below, a Large-flowered White, which turns pink as it matures. With dozens and dozens still in bloom in one area, they put on quite a show. A bit less showy, but still very pretty, Perfoliate Bellwort was just starting to bloom today. The stem appears to pierce the leaf. This is a feature this bellwort shares with the Large-flowered Bellwort, which we also found today, although most of them were starting to fade.

Since this morning's walk was arranged by the Audubon group, most of the participants were avid birders, armed with binoculars, as well as wildflower guides. It was a great treat for me to have them put a name to the birdsongs filling the woods all around us. Indigo Bunting, Scarlet Tanager, Great Crested Flycatcher, Tufted Titmouse, Wood Thrush, Red-eyed Vireo -- these and others were all birds I could not see with my eyes, but I sure could hear with my ears.

Note: Jackie Donnelly, who wanders the woods and waterways of Saratoga County recording her observations with her camera, wrote this account for her online nature blog, www.saratogawoodswater.blogspot.com, and allowed us to share it with our readers.



Photo by Jackie Donnelly



BIRDATHON 2011 Results

*Birdathon 2011 was held
Thursday, May 19, through Sunday, May 22.*

Cool weather made time spent in the field comfortable, and biting insects were not much of a problem. Intermittent rain, however, kept birds well hidden at times during the four-day period. Also problematic was the extreme high water in the Hudson River and other area bodies of water, making looking for waterfowl in the “usual” spots a challenge.

SAAS members Mona Bearor, Joan Dobert, Pat Fitzgerald, Jason Goldsmith, Linda Hoyt, Kathy Mapes, Carol Moyer, Joan Robertson, and Pat Walters beat the bushes in our three-county area to tally an impressive 124 species. Through pledges and donations, a total of \$448.00 was raised for the chapter's treasury.

A nice collection of shorebirds present at the flooded fields on Wright’s Loop in Stillwater included both Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs. Solitary, Spotted, Pectoral, Semi-palmated, and Least Sandpipers were also seen. Eastern Screech and Barred were the only owls found. All six woodpecker species were tallied in the total, although no individual birder or team scored a “six-pack.” As one would expect, given the recent rise in the insect population, seven flycatchers were found. A total of 19 warblers were seen; some special finds included Prairie, Blackburnian, Wilson’s, Canada, and Blue-winged. Expected species that were not seen by any of the parties included Carolina Wren, Northern Harrier, American Bittern, and Cedar Waxwing. A Sandhill Crane was present in Argyle during Birdathon, but word did not get out about the bird until it had left the area. A complete list of all species seen during Birdathon 2011 can be found on our website: www.southernadironackaudubon.org.



Did You Know?

On the chapter website,

www.southernadironackaudubon.org

you can:

- ✓ See information on upcoming monthly public programs & field trips
- ✓ Read our newsletter, *The Fledgling*
- ✓ Find out how you can help with important citizen science projects
- ✓ Learn about special birding hotspots in the chapter area
- ✓ Keep up with our members’ efforts in the areas of conservation and education
- ✓ See a list of the 270 bird species recorded in our chapter area
- ✓ Read about ways you can help the chapter by volunteering

Put the website to work for you, and let us know how we can improve it!

* * * * *

SAAS Board of Directors Meeting Schedule

Friday, June 17 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

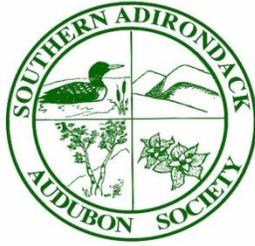
The Executive Board
does not meet in July and August.

Friday, September 23 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Meetings are held at Crandall Library and are open to the public.
Interested members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

The Fledgling

79 Laurel Lane
Queensbury, NY 12804



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SOUTHERN ADIRONDACK AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Secretary	Linda Hoyt	518-494-2380
Treasurer	Virginia Vogel	518-584-3936
Newsletter Editor	OPEN	
Education	Linda White	518-792-4446
Publicity	Carol Moyer	518-793-1960
Conservation	Jason Goldsmith	518-480-4243
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DIRECTORS

2008-2011

Linda Hoyt	494-2380
Linda White	792-4446
Pat Walters	793-1960

2009-2012

Carol Moyer	793-1960
Jason Goldsmith	480-4243

2010-2013

Pat Fitzgerald	792-6846
Ginny Vogel	584-3936

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

National membership in the Audubon Society includes the magazine, *Audubon*, and the SAAS newsletter, *The Fledgling*. The cost is \$20 annually for regular membership and \$15 for seniors and students. Make checks payable to "National Audubon Society," and send with name, address, and phone number to the address listed below. Membership as a "Chapter Supporter" is \$10 annually and includes *The Fledgling* and all chapter activities. Make check payable to "Southern Adirondack Audubon Society" and send with name, address, and phone number to:
Majken Sellar, 9 Allen Rd. Ext., Argyle, NY 12809

Newsletter Submission Policy: We welcome submissions to *The Fledgling*. Please email your articles to Audubon@netheaven.com, and include your name and contact information. We reserve the right to edit as necessary.