



The Fledgling

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

Vol. 29 No. 2 December 2011 – February 2012

President's Message

SAAS annual elections were held at the October General meeting. Elected to serve a three-year term on the SAAS Board of Directors was Sue Pierce, a naturalist and active member of the Friends of Moreau Lake State Park. Sue will be our liaison with the park and will be helping to implement the Audubon in the Parks program, an initiative of Audubon New York. Jim Ries has stepped up to serve on the board also, and was appointed to fill a vacant 2-year term. Jim has traveled with Mass Audubon throughout the Northeast and to Belize and Costa Rica. He is also involved with the bird banding stations on Appledore Island and Plum Island as a volunteer, and is active with the Hudson Mohawk Bird Club. I will continue to serve as President. Our treasurer Ginny Vogel has had to step down after many, many years. Mona Bearor has volunteered to take on that role and has already been working diligently to make the transition smooth. The position of Vice-President remains open, as do two other directors positions. We need help to fill these positions. Please consider serving on our board. Board members serve a 3-year term. If you would like to volunteer for SAAS, but don't want the commitment of a three-year term, there are several other ways to help. See the list of activities that need volunteer help on page 5.

This year we put up several bluebird boxes throughout the area. Russell Guard, of Washington County placed 35 boxes in the Washington County Fairgrounds. He recently reported that 49 chicks fledged! Other chapter members put up boxes near their homes and several had successful nests. This fall six more bluebird boxes were put up at the SUNY Adirondack campus, four were placed near the Hudson Pointe nature trails and eight

Please join us for the following

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.

December 2011
No Public Program
Happy Holidays!

Wednesday, January 25 **6:30 p.m.***

Showing of the "Gasland, The Movie"
A documentary on Hydrofracking
*** Because of the length of the movie, this program will begin at 6:30 p.m. instead of the usual 7 p.m.**

Wednesday, February 29 7 p.m.
"Audubon at Home"
with Pam Musk of Audubon New York

were placed in the Union Cemetery in Hudson Falls. Next spring we should have lots of bluebird activity. All the boxes need to be monitored to make sure that we are not providing nesting sites for House sparrows. Monitoring the boxes is an easy way to watch the young develop and fledge. Children especially enjoy seeing the birds as they build the nests and the young chicks take their first flight. If you are interested in "adopting" a box or boxes to monitor, please call Pat at 792-6846.

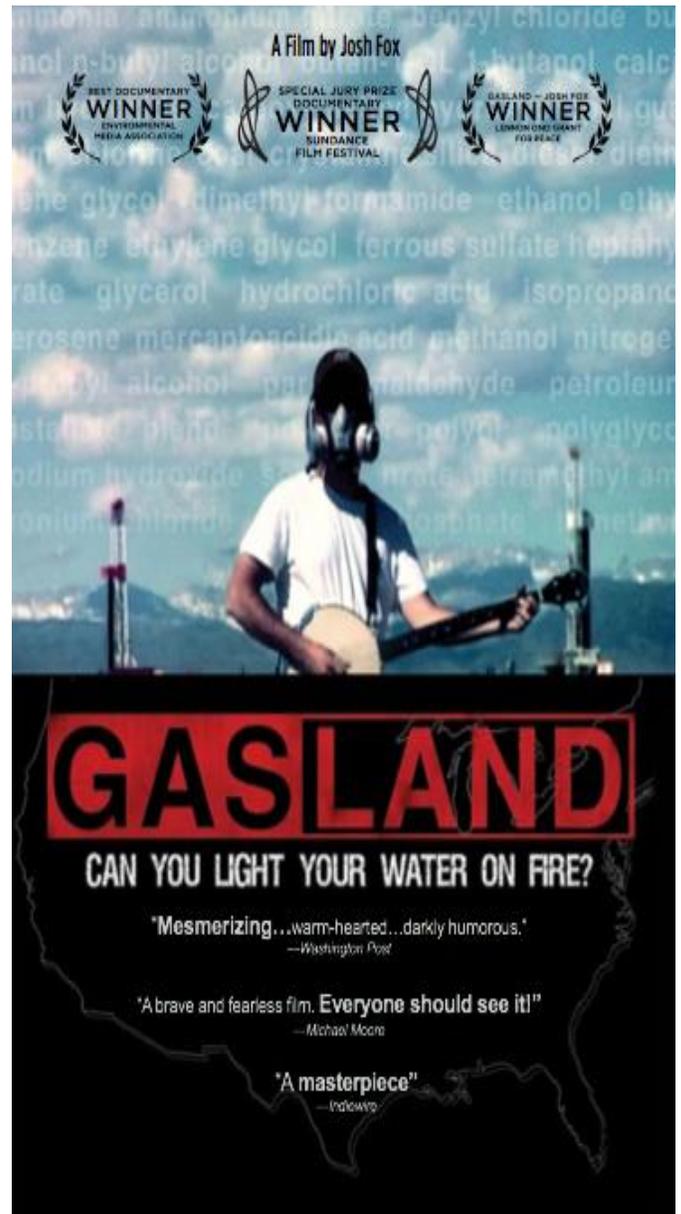
Pat Fitzgerald, President

Gasland, The Movie

The largest domestic natural gas drilling boom in history has swept across the United States. The Halliburton-developed drilling technology called "fracking" or hydraulic fracturing, has unlocked a "Saudi Arabia of natural gas" just beneath us. But is fracking safe? When filmmaker Josh Fox is asked to lease his land for drilling, he embarks on a cross-country road trip to find the answer to this question. A nearby Pennsylvania town, which was recently drilled, reports that residents are able to light their drinking water on fire. This is just one of the many absurd and astonishing revelations of a new country called Gasland. Part travelogue, part expose, part mystery, part bluegrass banjo meltdown, part showdown, Gasland is a cross-country odyssey with unexpected humor, uncovering a trail of secrets, lies and contamination.

Josh Fox is Founder and Artistic Director of the award winning film and theater production house International WOW Co. His feature documentary debut *Gasland* won the 2010 Sundance Special Jury Prize, the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival Artistic Vision Award, the Audience Award at Thin Line Film Festival, the Special Jury Prize at Sarasota International Film Festival, and the Grand Jury Prize at the Yale Environmental Film Festival.

Southern Adirondack Audubon, together with the Glens Falls/Saratoga Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club, will show this movie on Wednesday, January 25 at the Crandall Public Library in Glens Falls. **Because of the length of the movie, the showing will begin promptly at 6:30 p.m. As always, the program is free and open to the public.**



Charlie Chickadee has Moved to Northland Gardens!

After 48 years at **88 Acres** in Queensbury, Charlie Chickadee is moving south to **Northland Gardens**. All your favorite bird feeding supplies, birdbaths, etc. will be available at Charlie's new home.

For more information call 518-798-4277 or stop by Northland Gardens at 423 West Mountain Rd. in Queensbury.

Winter Field Trips

Monthly Walks at the Betar Byway

Birding walks led by members of Southern Adirondack Audubon will not be held during the winter months. They will begin again on the first Friday of every month starting in April, weather permitting.

Saturday, December 10 8:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. Pack Forrest, Warrensburg

We will bird the nature trail among magnificent White Pines, checking out the Grandmother tree, then walk to the lake area, and look for waterfowl. Bring binoculars, a scope if you have one, and wear good walking shoes. We will cover about two miles on flat even terrain. Call Jim Ries at 518-792-4477 to sign up. The trip is open to all, birders and non- birders alike.

Saturday, January 21 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Native Animals, Ecology, and Animal Tracking Workshop



Vince Walsh, of Kawing Crow Awareness Center, and Southern Adirondack Audubon Society will be holding a workshop focusing on North East native animals, ecology, and animal tracking at the 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. **This workshop is limited to 20 participants and is FREE.** Children, accompanied by an adult, are welcome to attend. You will need to bring your lunch and beverage, and dress for the weather. Call Pat at 792-6846 to register.

SPECIAL THANKS

Southern Adirondack Audubon Society would like to extend a sincere thank you to all who participated in the TogetherGreen Volunteer Work Day on Saturday, September 17.

Joining forces with the Lake George Association, we removed invasive species and planted native bushes and shrubs along West Brook in Lake George. Those in attendance were:

Lisa Adamson
Ramona Bearor
Stewart Brown
Emily DeBolt
Chris Germain
Jason Goldsmith
Russ Hilliard
Dan Hurley
Peter Leyh
Shaina Moore
Don Polunci
Marilyn Randall
Jim Ries
Jill Trinko

Dennis Barden
Kathy Bosy
Katherine Chambers
Pat Fitzgerald
Melissa Girard
Mike Grasso
Michelle Humphrey
Samuel Kluck
Sandy Meents
Alex Pezzoli
Nan Polunci
Kristen Rohne
Rich Speidel
Chelsea Yosco

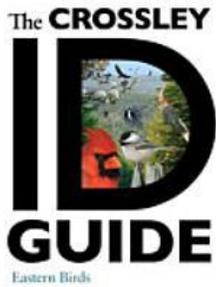
We will be sponsoring another TogetherGreen Volunteer Work Day in the spring. The details of time and place will be announced in the March issue of *The Fledgling*, on our website, and on our Facebook page. We hope you will join us for hard work, fun, and good food.



A volunteer plants native shrubs at West Brook in Lake George.

One Birder's Opinion

The Crossley ID Guide: Eastern Birds



If you want to be a better birder - and don't we all strive to increase our skill level? - you must add this volume by internationally known birder and photographer, Richard Crossley, to your short list of "must have" birding field guides.

This book is not just another guide with updated plates and information; rather, it presents a totally new concept in bird identification. Over 660 species are represented in photos, which show size, posture, and behavior, all superimposed onto backgrounds illustrating the habitat in which each species is commonly observed. Instead of seeing a static image against a sterile blank page, these photos make the birds come alive, and to see the birds as we are apt to see them in nature is a revolutionary concept that works. The accompanying text points out specific markings and colors, but the emphasis in the scenes is on different postures, plumage patterns, and behavior, rather than on color - which we all know can vary widely.

In a video interview on the Princeton Press website, the author says he created a book for which he himself had a need, in hopes that it would fill a need for others as well. I believe he succeeded. Many times, I have tried to memorize markings, only to open my field guides and find nothing that looked like what I had just seen; either color was not quite right, or perhaps I had observed a bird flying away from me and the guides illustrated only a bird perched in an upright position. As lovely as the close-up photo illustrations in the layouts are, I believe the ones showing the birds flying and distant will be the most valuable. Did you ever wonder how experienced birders can identify a bird that appears as no more than a dark speck against a light sky? Attention to flight patterns and silhouette are the key, and this book will help you increase your skills in those areas.

Some have complained that the pages are "too busy;" I think this comment shows how dependent we have become on field guides, which silhouette birds against a plain white page. I think this new reality format is exciting and useful, presenting so much information in each layout. A few hours with this book on a snowy afternoon this winter will surely make separating those warblers next spring an easier task!

Do I think this book will become your "first choice, have to have it with me" field guide? No, as its large size and weight of over two pounds prohibit carrying in the field. However, I do believe this book demands a place on your bookshelf - or even more accessible in the trunk of your car - as a "go-to-first" reference when that puzzling species flies through your binocular view.

-Mona Bearor

Note:

Richard Crossley will be signing his revolutionary book *The Crossley ID Guide* at Wild Birds Unlimited in Saratoga Springs on Sunday, December 11 from 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Welcome to new chapter supporters!

As of December 1, we have 115 chapter supporters. Our most recent new chapter supporters are:

Suzette Usher	Queensbury
John Cordes	Glens Falls
Jim and Melinda Durrler	Fort Edward

Membership runs from January through December. We will be sending out renewal notices in December. In order to save on postage we send only one notice. This year we will be asking all renewing chapter supporters their preference for the newsletter: mailed by the post office, e-mailed to their e-mail address or reading it on our website www.southernadironackaudubon.org.

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.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT - 2011



The Southern Adirondack Audubon Society invites birders and nature enthusiasts to take part in the 112th annual Christmas Bird Count, to be held Sunday, December 18, 2011. Tens of thousands of volunteers will participate in over 2,000 individual counts scheduled to take place throughout the Americas from December 14, 2011 to January 5, 2012. Data which is generated will become a valuable addition to the U.S. Government's natural history monitoring database.

The public is welcome to join one of our teams as birds are counted within a 15-mile-diameter circle centered in Hudson Falls. The circle includes the city of Glens Falls, the villages of South Glens Falls, Fort Edward, and Hudson Falls, as well as much of the towns of Queensbury, Fort Edward, and Moreau. There are many diverse habitats within our count circle that makes for interesting observations. You

do not need to be a bird identification expert to participate; we need birders of all skill levels, and non-birders are especially welcome to help spot birds or keep team records.

If you are interested in joining one of our count teams for either a whole or partial day, please call Linda White at 518-792-4446.

Volunteers Needed

If you are interested in volunteering with SAAS, the following opportunities are available:

- Joining the SAAS trail steward at Moreau Lake State Park to walk a trail, pick up trash, and report trail conditions,
- Assisting in grant-writing to raise monies for various conservation and educational projects,
- Making a basket for our monthly raffle, or
- Monitoring the winter raptors in the Fort Edwards Grasslands IBA with SAAS chapter members.

For more information about any of these volunteer activities, call Pat Fitzgerald at 792-6846.

SAAS Board of Directors Meeting Schedule

The SAAS Board does not meet in December.

Friday, January 20 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Friday, February 24 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.



Southern Adirondack Audubon Adopts a Loon

Southern Adirondack Audubon “adopted” a loon from the BioDiversity Research Institute. Our adoption helps biologists to continue studying loons, their behavior, their habitat, and the environmental threats they face. Proceeds from the adoption funds go towards supporting the work of non-profit loon conservation groups. In recent years, funds have been used for constructing and floating nesting rafts where natural habitat is degraded, and monitoring the effects of mercury on loon behavior and reproductive success.

In 1989, biologist from BioDiversity Research Institute began safely banding loons across much of North America. To date they have banded and released more than 3,000 loons without incident. A species of special concern in New York, the common loon breeds in the Adirondacks. To evaluate the status and long-term trends of New York’s loon population, an annual citizen-science survey has been conducted from 2001 – 2010 by the Wildlife Conservation Society’s Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation. More than 500 observers now report from more than 200 New York lakes and ponds every year. Loons have consistently been observed on approximately 74% of the lakes and ponds. Chicks have consistently been observed on approximately 28% of the lakes and ponds.

The loon adopted by SAAS is a male. He was banded on August 19, 2003. He weighs 6050 grams and his territory is Beaver Lake in the eastern part of the Adirondacks. Blood and feather samples were collected for mercury and genetics analysis. This male received a satellite transmitter to follow his migration. The male and his unbanded mate successfully fledged a chick in 2003. The transmitter sent signals to the satellite every 2 -3 days, and his migration was monitored on the US Geological Survey website throughout the year. On November 19, 2003, he flew to the coast of New Jersey, where he spent the winter. On April 21, 2004, he flew back to his territory on Beaver Lake, and paired with an unbanded mate. Although two eggs were laid, only one chick hatched in early July. This loon’s satellite transmitter was removed in July 2004. The female was also captured and banded. The pair successfully fledged their chick. In 2005, the banded pair returned. They successfully nested and fledged one chick. In 2006, our male returned to Beaver Lake with his banded female. This pair nested in mid-June, but the two eggs were lost

to heavy rains. The pair did not attempt to re-nest. In 2007, our loon returned with his banded mate. Together they successfully nested and hatched two chicks. Unfortunately, both chicks disappeared soon after hatching. In 2009, the male returned once again with his banded mate. They nested and hatched two chicks in early July. One chick disappeared by late July, while the other chick was observed in the fall with its parents. In 2010, the loon was observed on the east territory of Beaver Lake with its banded mate. They nested and hatched two chicks by late June. One of the chicks disappeared but the other one was observed throughout the summer and appeared well.

You can find more information about loon conservation and loon adoption on the BioDiversity Research Institute’s website: www.briloon.org/about-bri/support/adopt-a-loon.

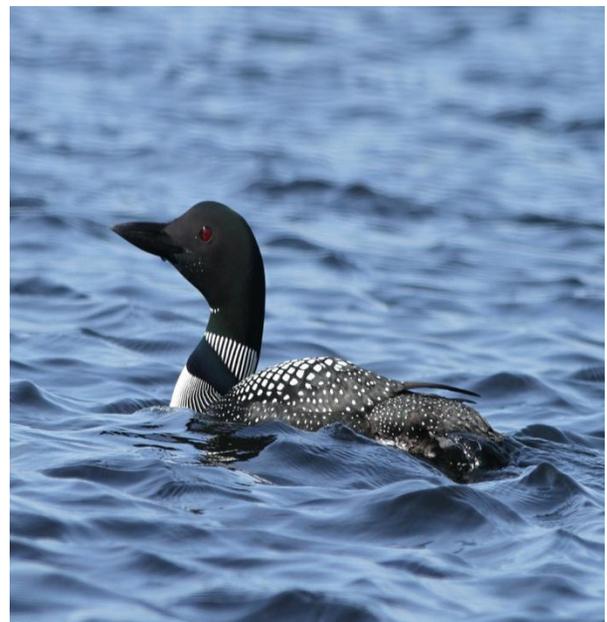


Photo by Don Polunci

Win a Free Week at Camp



Each year Southern Adirondack Audubon Society awards a student scholarship to attend one of the state-owned environmental education summer camps. The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)

plays host to students 11 to 17 years old at Camp Colby in Saranac Lake and Pack Forest in Warrensburg. While there, campers enjoy a balance of environmental education and outdoor fun. Games, lessons, and hands-on activities teach campers about forests, water quality, and other aspects of nature. Swimming, hiking and canoeing are always fun, too. Additional information about the DEC camps can be found on-line at www.dec.ny.gov/education/29.html.

Anyone interested in going to camp for a week in 2012 is invited to apply. Potential campers should write a short essay describing why they would like to attend camp, and share experiences they have already had outdoors.

Board members of Southern Adirondack Audubon will select one entrant to receive the scholarship. The camper's family will be responsible for providing transportation to and from the camp. The camper will be asked to either write a brief article about their camping experience or give a short presentation to our members at the September 2012 public program.

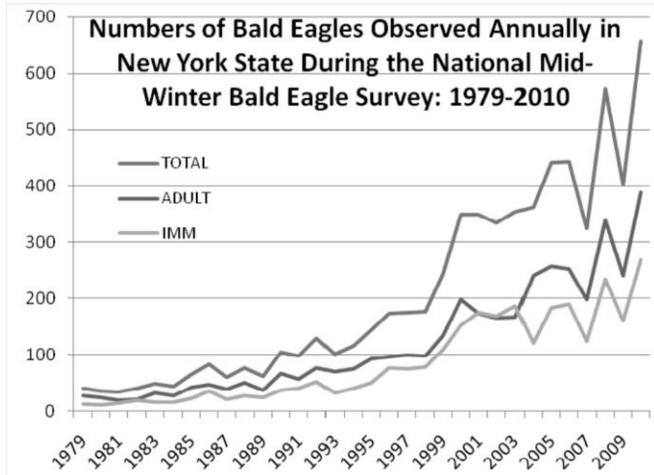
Please direct any questions to Mona Bearor at 518-745-8637. Entrants may submit contact information (name, address, telephone number) along with their essay to:

Mona Bearor
4 Windy Lane
South Glens Falls, NY 12803

Essays must be received by January 15, 2012.

Bald Eagle Restoration, Research and Management

The New York State Bald Eagle Restoration Project began in 1976 in an attempt to reestablish a breeding population through *hacking* (hand rearing to independence). Over a 13-year period, 198 nestling bald eagles were collected (most from Alaska), transported and released in New York.



The hacking project ended in 1989, when it accomplished its goal of establishing ten breeding pairs. The focus of the bald eagle program has now shifted to finding and protecting nesting pairs in New York, and monitoring their productivity. Bald eagles continue to do well; in 2010, New York had 173 breeding pairs that fledged 244 young. Each year, New York's bald eagles fledge about 10 percent more young eagles than the year before.

Hopes are high that bald eagles will continue to expand in New York and elsewhere, repopulating areas from which they have disappeared. In the meantime, the challenge is to secure sufficient suitable eagle habitat and to limit human disturbance within these habitats, allowing the species to continue to live and expand in New York.

The section of the Hudson River that runs through Moreau Lake State Park is home to wintering bald eagles. Eagle watch monitoring will be conducted by the park naturalist on Friday December 16 and December 30 beginning at 9:30 a.m. If you are interested in participating or would like more information about the project, call the park office at 793-0511. Registration is required.

The Fledgling

79 Laurel Lane
Queensbury, NY 12804



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SOUTHERN ADIRONDACK AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Treasurer	Mona Bearor	518-745-8637
Newsletter Editor	OPEN	
Education		518-792-4446
Publicity	Carol Moyer	518-793-1960
Conservation	Jason Goldsmith	518-480-4243
Membership	Majken Sellar	518-638-8867
Website	www.southernadirondackaudubon.org	
Email SAAS:	audubon@netheaven.com	

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2009-2012

Carol Moyer	793-1960
Jason Goldsmith	480-4243
Jim Ries	792-4477

2010-2013

Pat Fitzgerald	792-6846
Ginny Vogel	584-3936

2011-2014

Linda Hoyt	494-2380
Sue Pierce	798-2051
Pat Walters	932-3320

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