

# The Fledgling

Vol. 18, No. 3, March - May 2001

## From the President

### Vital Issue

Joseph Kern

Once again it is my responsibility as your president, to focus your attention on the most important issue facing our chapter in the year 2001. It has to do with our continued existence as the Southern Adirondack chapter of the Audubon Society. To restate succinctly what I think has been stated many times: we desperately need to generate volunteers. Volunteers have not come forward to help maintain and expand the unique and valuable contribution that SAAS works so hard to bring to the local community, and beyond. Nor has anyone volunteered to give much needed assistance, or to provide replacement for some of the few that have been doing All the work for a very long time.

Some of those who have given so much of themselves to SAAS, need to retire, and when they do, if we have no one on board to replace them we will no longer have a viable chapter. I believe this will be a sad loss to our members and to the community. I hope an awakening occurs soon, so that I do not have to continue this campaign in every newsletter, but rather can get on to other important tasks facing SAAS.

All the methods for contacting Chairs and Board Members are conveniently located on the back of the Fledgling. I sincerely hope we will hear from you soon. We need your help now, to prevent Southern Adirondack Audubon Society from becoming a fond memory or, at best, a fading shadow of its former self.

If there is someone out there that has any ideas about how we might, better attract active members, please call me at 494-7168(Home), or e-mail: Bigdog150@aol.com. I am open to and welcome any thoughts or suggestions.

## 2001 Calendar

Marion Cole

Monthly chapter meetings are held at the Crandall Library, on the fourth Wednesday of the month, except as noted below. Mark your calendar and join us for some exciting presentations by guest speakers featured below. Guests are welcome. Bring one with you!

THE MEETINGS WILL START PROMPTLY AT 7PM.  
PLEASE BE ON TIME.

<b>March 28</b>	Bruce Cole Adirondack Historical Travelogue
<b>April 25</b>	Mike Berger, National Audubon Wintering Birds and Forest Biodiversity
<b>May 23</b>	Bob Budlinger, National Audubon The Breeding Bird Atlas
<b>June 27</b>	Linda Theiss Review of Maine's Environmental Camp

## Bluebirds - Then and Now

Claire W. Hunter

Bluebirds were a rare sight in this area eighteen years ago. Our New York State bird had almost disappeared as habitat changed. But things have changed since, partly due to the efforts of groups like SAAS.

At our last Board meeting, we scanned the report of the winter bird count and rejoiced that on the week before Christmas there were still seven bluebirds reported. Many bluebird trails have been set up. Each spring people

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## **Pileated Woodpecker**

Barb Putnam

I always feel lucky when I see this regal woodpecker. It is the largest in North America (not counting the probably extinct ivory-billed). Its pattern is striking: mostly satin black with bright white on the face/neck and white underwings. The crow-sized male has a crimson red mustache and a flaming red crest covering the top of the head. The female has a smaller red crest and a black mustache. I read that the young have orange where the adults have red, but I have never witnessed this.

The pronunciation of its name fits in the same category as tomato, aunt, and either. I have heard it pronounced differently by very respected, knowledgeable birders, so you will be in good company no matter which pronunciation you choose. I usually say pie-lee-ated but pill-ee-ated is just as common.

Pileated woodpeckers like forests and open woodlands with mature trees that hold carpenter ants. These birds leave characteristically large rectangular holes in their feeding trees. Since their territories are large, even if you find recent evidence of them, it might take lots of patience and time to see one. They defend as much as 200 acres!

Pileateds are permanent residents in our area (they do not migrate) and pairs hold their territory year round. If you are lucky, they might come to your suet feeder. It is thought that the pileated woodpecker digs a new nesting hole each year. This is wonderful for wood ducks, American kestrels, and eastern screech-owls.

We have an elm tree at the end of our driveway that is rapidly dying. Many birds are working it this winter - including a pair of pileateds. The pileateds will allow a fairly close encounter as long as I am quiet.

I understand the cartoon character, Woody Woodpecker, was patterned after a pileated woodpecker. Some of the other common names of this bird are logcock, great black woodpecker, wood hen, and wood kate. Whatever you call it or however you pronounce it, the pileated woodpecker is a very striking find.

## *Editor's Corner*

Ewa Hammer

Most of my winter was spent in Florida with three delightful grandchildren ranging in ages from four and a half to newborn. Since Mom was unfortunately ill much of the time, I found myself enjoyably but more intensely employed than I had initially anticipated. Nevertheless, my husband and I made sure to find some time for birding activities.

We took a few guided walks, which I especially appreciate when birding in a new area. A local guide not only knows the local hot spots, but also where and when interesting birds can best be seen. Birders are often full of amusing stories and anecdotes about their birding experiences. So a guided walk is often a lot of fun as well as very informative.

Towards the end of our stay, we signed up for two evenings of birding classes followed by a morning walk. At first I was hesitant to do this, because having attended a number of bird talks and conferences, and gone on a variety of field trips over the last few years, I thought I knew the 'basics'. I was astonished at how little I actually did know and how much I learned. Our instructor, the president of a local Audubon chapter and a birding veteran of fifty years turned out to be a wonderful teacher. He provided us with comprehensive, well organized handouts full of useful information, which we can study and keep as valuable reference material. The walk was a continuation of the teaching. Rather than identifying the ones, our teacher asked us to do so and explain the distinguishing features. We saw a lot of interesting birds including a real closeup of Sandhill Cranes. It was a lot of fun, and a great learning experience.

The class revitalized my excitement in birding. It is so true that the more one knows about a subject, the more one can enjoy it. If you know someone who might be interested in teaching such a class, please ask them to contact me via e-mail. I hope SAAS will be in a position to sponsor one in our area soon.

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## **Bird Census, Yes!**

Joan Robertson

That's right! We are going to do this again. The annual survey during migration is of considerable value in gauging what is happening to the species that are passing through our area during the month of May. There was great cooperation last year and our local birders turned in some extensive lists.

The project will involve no fund-raising. We hope that there will be many one, two, and four person teams that will take a day during the week of May 12th to 20th to try to rack up a huge species list, in order to continue the historical records that we have been maintaining for

many years. We have seen that there are significant changes, which are important to document.

If you decide to do a birding trip, dawn to dusk, or for whatever is convenient, please call Linda White 792-4446 to register your team and then send her your total list within a few days. That is all you need to do. This is a quest for scientific information and not fund-raising.

There will be chocolate bars distributed to the team with the highest total and to the team with a new species for the territory. Jack Howe was the winner of the Best Day award last year. Please join us. You will enjoy it!

## Help Wanted

The Fledgling has immediate openings for the following positions: Calendar Coordinator, Column Writer.

### Calendar Coordinator:

We are planning to expand our calendar to include all events of interest to local birders. In addition to those sponsored by SAAS, this would include birdwalks, talks, lectures, or other presentations that our members might enjoy, and which pertain to the SAAS areas of involvement. We need a coordinator to pull together this information from local and online magazines, from organizations or individuals, on a quarterly basis, then e-mail it to the editor for publication. Are you a person, who is or would like to become immersed in local birding information? Hurry to apply before we hire your friend.

### Column Writer:

If you are into hi-tech, The Fledgling needs you. We are looking to start a quarterly column reviewing equipment of interest to our members. This would include reviews of specific items such as binoculars, scopes, tripods, cameras, and also practical information on what to look for when buying, how much to pay, where to buy. This would be Your column and you would decide what to write about. As an added bonus, if you can sell them on the importance of The Fledgling, you might get Leica, Swarovsky and others to donate free equipment for you to review...But that all depends on your skills. Anyway, it's a nice thought.

Qualifications required: ability to read and write.

Hours: flexible.

Compensation: satisfaction of performing a valuable service.

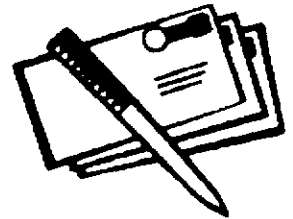
Benefits: we will publicly thank you at a chapter meeting, AND your name will appear on the staff of The Fledgling. Additional benefits negotiable based on qualifications and experience. You may qualify for extra copies of The Fledgling, for example, so you can boast to friends and neighbors of your new title.

If you wish to apply for these exciting job opportunities, please e-mail the editor ASAP.



## From the Membership Chair

Claire Hunter



**AUTUMN CHALLENGE:** SAAS met the challenge to recruit new members with six new memberships, according to the final report received February 15. This compared very favorably with other New York chapters listed. Thanks to those who supported our chapter. New members are most welcome. This is also a reward to our treasury, as the chapter received twice the usual dues share from National.

**WELCOME:** to new members who joined through SAAS since the last newsletter: Joan Henderson, Hudson Falls; Nancy and Pete Hutchins, Indian Lake; Janet McAvoy, Wilton; Kathleen Shaheen-Sinnott, Diamond Point. **WELCOME:** to the 37 new members assigned to SAAS by National Audubon. We hope to extend a personal greeting at a chapter meeting. (Meetings for the year are listed on the front page of each newsletter).

**REJOICING IN RENEWALS:** We have had 92 renewals in the last few months. These are members whom we especially appreciate. Many have been with us since our charter date.

**CHAPTER CHARTER:** Our spring issue annually recalls our chapter formation in 1983. At an early meeting the newsletter was christened, The Fledgling. The proponent of the name received a bag of birdseed as a prize.

Happy spring! Happy birding! I'll be happy to receive calls or notes about membership, particularly about renewals.

## Bluebirds - Then and Now

*(continued from Front Page)*

in our chapter area have welcomed the return of the nesting bluebirds, who often have three broods.

The feeling on the part of Board members was that we helped save the bluebirds, by having some part in raising awareness of how environmental concerns directly relate to their survival. This was a good feeling, especially since many important environmental struggles are yet to be won.

**BLUEBIRD NEST BOXES:** Here is some useful information from my files for those planning to set up homes for bluebirds. Nest box openings, usually round, should be one inch in diameter, the floor of the nest box, about five inches square. Placement should be about three to six feet high on a pole or fence post. The site usually favored by the birds is one facing an open lawn or meadow. The nest hole facing open space is reminiscent of the fence post cavities chosen by the birds when farm land offered such sites.

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### 1999-2002

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Joan Robertson	656-9223
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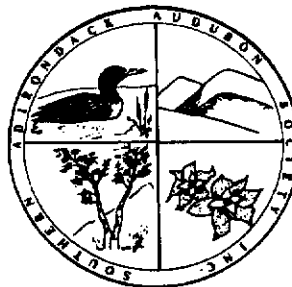
Marion A. Cole	743-9631
Ginny Vogel	584-3936

## APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the National Audubon Society and Southern Adirondack Audubon includes the bimonthly magazine **Audubon** and SAAS newsletter, **The Fledgling**. The cost is \$20 for regular memberships and \$15 for seniors. Make checks payable to "National Audubon Society" and send with name/address/phone number to: Claire Hunter, 3 Edgewood Drive, PO Box 1382, South Glens Falls, NY 12803-1382. Please note: National Audubon does not recognize chapter only memberships.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_



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