

The Fledgling

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

Vol. 26 No. 4

Jun 2009 – Aug 2009

President's Message

It's hard to believe that my second term as president will be over in December. Our by-laws allow one to serve as president for two terms only. Elections will be held at the October meeting.

I became involved with this chapter when I was invited by Joan Robertson to present a program on the Sandhill Cranes of Bosque del Apache, New Mexico. Travel and bird photography are my favorite pastimes, and I enjoy sharing my photos with others. I returned a few more times to show my slides to the group. In the summer of 2005 I received an appeal letter from the board stating that the organization was struggling to stay alive. Board members and officers were needed. I was concerned enough to attend a special meeting, and told my wife that I might volunteer to chair the program committee. Imagine her surprise (mine too!) when I returned home to announce that I was the new president! I was "green!" I knew nothing about Audubon. I was not a birder. I didn't even know what an IBA was!

I have learned a great deal in my role as president. I have met people who have made a difference working at the local, state and national levels. I have enjoyed networking with other chapter leaders to learn what they do in their areas. I have learned about bird species, habitat, and migration. I have realized how important it is to participate in local government by attending planning board meetings. I have taken part in surveys to document the presence of endangered and threatened bird species in the Fort Edward Grasslands with the hope that it will protect their habitat from development. I have discovered places to hike and observe nature that I didn't know existed in our area. I have made new friends! I now realize that Audubon is respected throughout the world in the fields of conservation and environmental education.

SAAS Calendar

Please join us! This entertaining and educational program will be held at the Moreau Community Center, 144 Main St., So. Glens Falls, NY

June 24 7pm SAAS member, cheese artisan, and nature essayist, Liza Porter will present "Why Buy Local?"

Please see page 2 for a special announcement about this program!

July & August *No Meeting*

In September, we will be returning to the Crandall Library in Glens Falls. Check the September issue of *The Fledgling* for further information on dates, times, and room location.

SAAS will be reorganizing over the summer. We are looking for volunteers. Why volunteer? To gain leadership skills, have an impact, make new friends, explore personal interests, increase self confidence, protect wildlife and natural areas, have fun, remain productive, share a skill, and give something back. If you are interested in education, concerned about the environment, would like to serve on a committee such as fundraising, budget, or programs, if you'd like to lead a field trip, write an article for our newsletter, serve on our board, or help at a community event, we would love to hear from you. None of these positions require you to be an expert! None of us are! Please contact any officer, or plan to attend a board meeting to see what we do.

No one can do everything, but everyone can do something!

Don Polunci, President

Membership Notes by Pat Fitzgerald



Welcome to new chapter supporters!

Theresa A. Boire	Fort Edward
Elizabeth Fuller	Ballston Spa
Cate Howland	Queensbury
Brian & Leah Leibacher	Kattskill Bay
Irene Norris	South Glens Falls
Madeline Roland	Gansevoort
Jerry Salkowe	Saratoga Springs
Majken Sellar	Argyle
Mary Springer	South Glens Falls
Marcia Stout-Roche	Kattskill Bay

I am happy to report that, as of May 15, we have over 100 Chapter Supporters. We appreciate your continued support of our efforts in the areas of conservation and environmental education. Gift memberships are available and may be made to anyone in any location, not necessarily in the local area.

Annual dues of \$10 may be sent to Pat Fitzgerald, 79 Laurel Lane, Queensbury, NY 12804. Attend a public program and join at a special rate of 2 years for \$15. Go on a chapter-sponsored field trip and take advantage of a special offer of 1 year for \$5. Checks or money orders should be made out to SAAS.



Please join us for a Pre-program Social Hour June 24 6PM

In an effort to socialize with our members, we are trying something new for the June 24 program. Liza Porter will present "Why Buy Local" at 7:00pm at the Moreau Community Center. If you would like to join us for a pre-program pot luck snack/supper, please join us at 6:00pm and bring a cold item to share. We will provide cups, napkins, plates and plastic eating utensils, as well as cold beverages.

We hope you can join us!

Why Your Newsletter Address Label says "OR CURRENT RESIDENT"

In November of 2008, a new postal rule went into effect. That rule requires all bulk mail comply with Move Update standards. To comply, you must either certify to the post office that the addresses have been verified within the 95 days previous to mailing, or add "Or Current Resident" to each address. Mail address certification can be costly, and extra charges would be incurred for forwarding or return service.

Although we do not like the impersonality of "Or Current Resident," and we are aware that we might have some newsletters delivered to incorrect addresses, in the effort to keep costs contained we chose to bypass the requirement by adding "Or Current Resident" to each address.

We work diligently to maintain our mailing list. Since we have direct contact with our Chapter Supporters we believe those addresses are accurate. We must rely on lists from National Audubon Society (NAS) for mailing to "NAS Only" members, and we have no way to verify those addresses.

You can help us maintain an accurate address list!

IF YOU MOVE or IF THERE IS AN ERROR on the address label on your newsletter, please contact us so we can update our mailing database. You can reach Pat Fitzgerald, Membership Chair, at pfitz_007@yahoo.com or 518-792-6846



The Fledgling

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Moreau Second Graders Learn about Snowy Owls



SAAS President, Don Polunci, educated—and entertained!—students on April 8th with a presentation on Snowy Owls. Don was invited by Matt Armenio, a second grade teacher at Moreau Elementary School. The children were all enthusiastic, and sent Don appreciative thank-you notes, some of which are printed below. Who was having more fun—the kids, or Don?

From Karlee:

Thank you! for the presentation you did for us. It would be joyful if you brought a real snowy owl. I can't wait intill I'm in 4th grade so we can take apart the pellets.

Hoo Hoo Hoo.

From Morgan:

The pellets are desschusting but the rest is cool. Thank you.

From Maria:

I really loved the pitchers that you shoed us and thos pellets wore cool. Thank you.

Sage wrote:

Thank you. You are the best. Thanks for the presentation and thanks for teaching.

Terri:

Thank you for teaching us all about snowy owls. Why do you like to take picers of snowy owls.

SAAS Board of Directors Fall Meeting Schedule set

Wed., Sept. 23	10:00am-12:00pm
Fri., Oct 16	10:00am-12:00pm
Sun., Nov 18	1:00pm-3:00pm

All meetings will be held at Crandall Library and interested members are encouraged to attend. We welcome input and ideas from members. Please join us and help your chapter thrive!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

There are many events in which our chapter could participate, however, we sometimes lack the necessary people power ! We'd like to maintain a list of members who would be willing to occasionally give a few hours of their time to help the chapter. Perhaps you would like to help kids make bird feeders, or you could hand out brochures at tabling events or open houses. If you think you'd like to help out occasionally, please contact any board member to have your name added to our growing list of those who support SAAS.

Birders Speak Out to Protect the Fort Edward Grasslands IBA

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Killian's View Subdivision was released for public comment and received a huge response. Over 100 letters were written expressing concerns over the impact on grassland bird species that use this property. Thank you everyone who has submitted comments.

This proposed 352-lot subdivision is located in the Ft. Edward Grasslands Important Bird Area (IBA) which hosts the endangered Short-eared Owl, threatened Northern Harrier, Upland Sandpiper, and numerous other grassland birds. Habitat fragmentation caused by developments such as this, make grasslands one of the biggest concerns across the state.

The applicant must now address all substantial comments received by the public before submitting its Final Environmental Impact Statement.

You can help!

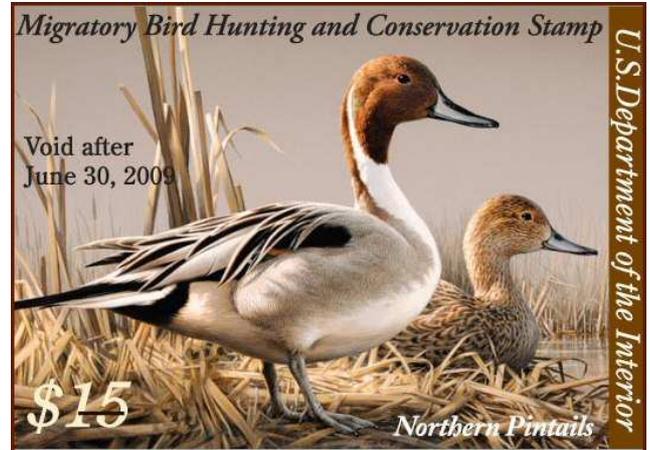
Donations are needed for legal costs associated with protecting this IBA. Donations are fully tax-deductible. Please make your check payable to "Southern Adirondack Audubon Society" and mail to: Virginia Vogel, 18 Newton Ave., Saratoga Springs, NY 12866. Be sure to note "IBA Conservation Fund" on the check.

-Jason Goldsmith
Conservation Chair



The Federal Duck Stamp It's Not Just for Hunters!

Since the 1934 creation of the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (commonly known as the Duck Stamp), sales of the stamp have generated over \$725 million for the conservation of wetlands and migratory bird habitat.



Receipts from the sale of the stamp are deposited in a special Treasury account known as the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund and are not subject to appropriations. Ninety-eight cents of every dollar realized from the sale of these stamps is used to protect valuable habitat—so far over 5 million acres of wetlands have been protected. This program is one of the most successful ever conservation initiatives.

Although originally issued as the federal license required for hunting migratory waterfowl, many stamps are currently being sold to conservationists, hikers, birders, and others who are concerned with habitat fragmentation and loss. In addition to serving as a hunting license and a conservation tool, a current year's Federal Duck Stamp also serves as an entrance pass for National Wildlife Refuges where admission is normally charged.

These stamps are colorful mini-works-of-art; the lovely Northern Pintails chosen for 2008-2009 will be replaced in July with a new design showing an interesting composition of Long-tailed Duck. The stamps can be purchased at any US Post Office.

Sadly, New Yorkers are now buying the stamp at a pre-1940 level. Three times as many stamps were sold annually in the 1970's as are being purchased each year currently. You can help support this valuable program by purchasing a duck stamp – many birders display the stamp on their binoculars, hikers often put the stamp on their water bottle, or you can show your support by putting the stamp on your car window. It's time we non-hunters who use federal lands put our money where our feet travel!

The marsh, to him who enters it in a receptive mood, holds, besides mosquitoes and stagnation, melody, the mystery of unknown waters, and the sweetness of Nature undisturbed by man.

CHARLES WILLIAM BEEBE (1877-1962), Log of the Sun, 1906

Spring Birding at Merck Forest



Wood Thrush by Gordie Ellmers

glued to our eyes, we identified a variety of sparrows and finches, as well as swallows, a Killdeer, a male Yellow Warbler, and a brilliant orange and black male Baltimore Oriole.

The trail meandered through fields and meadows before it re-entered the woods, where we encountered a variety of woodpeckers, vireos, warblers and more. We were fortunate to have several people good at birding by ear, for their skills helped us identify several species that were difficult to spot. A Black-throated Green Warbler and a Black-throated Blue Warbler sang to us from the treetops, hidden by the rapidly growing foliage. Our sound experts also identified a Winter Wren – a rare treat - but not even our best spotters could locate this elusive and uncommon little brown bird in the pile of downed trees and brush where it likes to forage.

A secretive Wood Thrush put our spotting abilities to the test, but most of us were eventually rewarded with a sight of its cleanly spotted white breast and rust-colored back and tail. Other favorites included a beautiful male Eastern Towhee who warned us to “drink your tea” and a sweet-voiced male Blackburnian Warbler. This bright orange, white and black warbler delighted the group with his antics among the treetops in his quest for insects.

Finally, as I listened to a twelve-year-old young man happily explain to us the difference between the call of the Northern Flicker and that of the Pileated Woodpecker (the Pileated is deeper), I was reminded that our shared enthusiasm and the willingness of other birders to share their knowledge is what makes birding field trips (whether I lead a trip or participate) one of my favorite pastimes. Our fieldtrip to Merck Forest was a great day of birding and an enjoyable, memorable outing for all. Many thanks to all who participated.

The 3000 acre Merck Forest & Farmland Center encompasses three mountains, two ponds, a 200 acre demonstration farm and miles of hiking trails. The working farm offers visitors a variety of organic products, from organic vegetables, meat and eggs to wool blankets and organic maple syrup. Go to www.merckforest.org to learn more.

-Submitted by Laurie LaFond

You Can Help NYS DEC with PCB Research

DEC is collecting mallard eggs for PCB analysis, as part of the Hudson River Natural Resource Damage Assessment. If anyone finds a mallard nest within a half mile of the Hudson River and would be willing to allow me to come and collect eggs for analysis, please contact me:

Sean Madden
518 402-8977

ssmadden@gw.dec.state.ny.us

Editor's Ramblings



This is my final issue as editor of *The Fledgling*. It has been eight years since I first offered to assist with the newsletter. Soon-to-be-retired, and feeling like I had all the time in the world, I was then volunteering for everything I had wanted to do, but couldn't, while working full time.

I quickly immersed myself in SAAS activities, and soon found myself as editor of the newsletter and on the Board of Directors. My first editor's column said, in part, "Although I am a little daunted at the responsibility, I am pleased to have the opportunity to play a part in the publication of *The Fledgling*..." I remember well writing those words and the feelings that accompanied them. I hope my time as editor has been good for the publication; I have tried to expand the newsletter and diversify the content in an effort to offer something of interest to as many members as possible. I know I have learned an incredible amount from others who have served on the board, and from the many members of SAAS whom I have had the pleasure of meeting.

It is time for me to move to other areas of service to the chapter, and allow the newsletter to evolve and change further. Two new chapter members have stepped forward to take over. I'll not reveal their names without their permission; however, they are highly capable and very enthusiastic, and they will make a great team to carry this newsletter forward. I wish them well and hope their future experiences with the chapter and its newsletter add the same richness to their lives as it has to mine.

-Mona Bearor

Field Trip Schedule

Wednesday, June 10 9-11:30am Songbird Research & Banding in Hadley

Sara DeLeon is a PhD candidate at Cornell University. She is studying the effect of PCBs on birdsong. We will observe Sara's field work at Hadley Park as she catches Chickadees and Song Sparrows in a mist net, takes a blood and feather sample, and bands them. After observing Sara, we will drive 15 minutes to Stewart's Pond to put our scope on the active eagle's nest there.



Meet at 9:00am at McDonald's on Corinth Rd., Glens Falls (Northway Exit 18) Bring water, wear a long-sleeved shirt and long pants. Contact Don and Nan Polunci at 793-1531 or nanandonp@gmail.com to register. Group size is limited. Rain or high winds will cancel.

Sunday, June 14 11am "21st Century Damsels and Dragons"



Join Larry Federman of Audubon New York for a fun-filled outing with dragonflies and damselflies. This program will be held at Wilton Wildlife Preserve & Park. Larry will present an introduction to these creatures, dispel some myths, and give an overview of the New York State

Dragonfly and Damselfly Survey. We will then attempt to catch these beautiful insects - catching them is as much sport as it is science! With speeds recorded at 30 mph catching the little critters can be very challenging. This program will be presented rain or shine.

Larry Federman is the Education Coordinator for three upstate New York Audubon sanctuaries. He is also president, newsletter editor, council delegate, and field trip leader for his local chapter.

Directions: From the North: Take Exit 16 off the Northway. At the end of the exit ramp, turn left, and after crossing I-87, turn right almost immediately, onto Edie Road. Drive approximately one mile to Scout Road. Turn left onto Scout Road. Drive approximately one mile, pass under the railroad trestle, and turn into first driveway on left, 80 Scout Road. From the South: Take Exit 16 off the Northway. At the end of the exit ramp, turn right and almost immediately turn right again onto Edie Rd. Drive approximately one mile to Scout Road. Turn left onto Scout Road. Drive approximately one mile, pass under the railroad trestle, and turn into first driveway on left, 80 Scout Road.

THIEVES!

by Phyllis Lombardi

[Editor's Note: This nature essay came to us by way of SAAS Treasurer Ginny Vogel, a friend of the author. Ms. Lombardi writes often for her local Audubon chapter and gave us permission to use this story about the interruption of the peaceful life on the eastern tip of Long Island.]

There is a gang of thieves in the Orient. Orient, Long Island, New York, that is. I witnessed the theft and I must warn you.

Strange, isn't it? That the north Fork, especially peaceful little Orient, should be the scene of such an outrage. People all over Long Island have come to think of our fork as a kind of haven from a hectic, sometimes violent, world. What I write now may burst their bubble.

The crime was perpetrated on a woman from Southold and her two sons, Jack, two, and Kyle, who is four. They decided to visit Orient Beach State Park on one of those glorious late fall days. They'd packed a lunch and the boys took a paper bag for the shells they planned to collect and display in their bedroom.

I know all this because my husband and I made a lunch as well, and put our bicycles in the back of the truck so we might spend the morning pedaling the park. We watched the ferries come and go. We got the lowdown from a couple of construction guys who were reinforcing the roadside against winter's worst. And we said hello to some North Forkers who were running the bicycle path.

We returned from our ride tired but ready to eat and appreciate our surroundings. We chose a beach bench and opened up our lunch, all the time admiring high clouds, golden leaves, and a few boats out on Peconic Bay. How lucky we were.

Then we heard it. Shouts coming from our right. Alarmed, my husband and I jumped up to see what was going on. Those shouts were scary. We'd never heard anything like it on the North Fork, especially the "Stop, thief" part. Maybe in an old movie, but not in Orient. Running our way was a slim young woman, her dark hair flying wildly, her arms waving and fingers pointing skyward. The woman was followed by two young boys who were yelling too, but not as loudly as their mom. I reached for my cell phone, and my husband said that he'd go back to our truck to get the first aid kit. We had no idea what the problem was.

At this point, the youngsters were almost directly in front of us, and we could make out what the younger one was calling out. Not "Stop, thief!" like his mom, but rather a simple pleading, over and over again, "Come back, bird, come back..." Then we knew we needed no cell phone or first aid kit. For Jack's fingers pointed to a gull that had flown to the family's picnic table and picked up the plastic bag with cream cheese and jelly sandwiches inside—the family's lunch!

That brazen gull flew over the state park picnic area and dropped the bag in the parking lot. Almost immediately, the gull's gang joined in and the whole bunch of thieves poked holes in the lunch bag while the family, along with my husband and I, watched. Then the three adults began laughing; however, the boys didn't think it was so funny—the only thing left on their picnic table were carrot sticks!

After the gang of thieves had finished their lunch, they flew away, leaving only an empty plastic bag. I thought I heard a bit of commotion in the sky. Do gull-thieves laugh as loons do?

I tell you all this for a reason. North Forkers have to toughen up. We can't go through life thinking that we're safe, that predators don't exist on our fork—we must be eternally vigilant. We've been sold a bill of goods about idyllic life on the North Fork.

We're just too darned gullible.

The Dangers of Monofilament Fishing Line

Please remember the dangers to birds and other wildlife as you enjoy the many local fishing spots in our chapter area. Monofilament fishing line is a huge threat to wildlife. Animals can become entangled in or ingest the line, causing deep wounds, strangulation, starvation, and death. I observed a Northern Cardinal on the

Betar Byway this spring that had died from starvation while entangled near a popular fishing spot. A wildlife rehabber spent weeks caring for a Long-eared Owl that was found in our chapter area with a severely injured wing caused by flying into a tangle of fishing line. Releasing a fish with a deeply embedded hook is not only cruel to the fish; it is a time bomb for other wildlife higher on the food chain. Hooks, lures, and weights can also become hazards if left behind at fishing sites.

Please help protect our wildlife from unnecessary harm.



SOUTHERN ADIRONDACK AUDUBON SOCIETY

President	Don Polunci	nanandon@gmail.com
Vice-President	position open	
Secretary	Linda Hoyt	518-494-2380
Treasurer	Virginia Vogel	518-584-3936
Newsletter Editor	Mona Bearor	ramonabearor@gmail.com
Education	Linda White	518-792-4446
Publicity	Jason Goldsmith	518-480-4243
Conservation	Jason Goldsmith	518-480-4243
Membership	Pat Fitzgerald	518-792-6846
Web address	www.southernadirondackaudubon.org	
email SAAS:	audubon@netheaven.com	

DIRECTORS

2006-2009

Mona Bearor	745-8637
Pat Fitzgerald	792-6846
Jason Goldsmith	480-4243

2007-2010

Laurie LaFond	955-8301
Nancy Polunci	793-1531
Ginny Vogel	584-3936

2008-2011

Linda Hoyt	494-2380
Claire Hunter	793-9088
Linda White	792-4446

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:
Pat Fitzgerald, 79 Laurel Ln., Queensbury, NY 12804

Newsletter Submission Policy

We welcome submissions to *The Fledgling*. Please email your articles to the editor if possible, and include your name and contact information. We reserve the right to edit as necessary. If you cannot email, please contact Mona Bearor at the number listed above.

The Fledgling



4 Windy Lane
South Glens Falls, NY 12803

Editor: Mona Bearor
ramonabearor@gmail.com
518-745-8637

Contributors:
Jason Goldsmith
Laurie LaFond
Phyllis Lombardi

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