

# The Fledgling

Newsletter of the Southern Adirondack Audubon Society  
[www.southernadirondackaudubon.org](http://www.southernadirondackaudubon.org)

Vol. 27 No. 1

Sept 2009 – Nov 2009

## President's Message

The Roman poet Phaedrus said "Things are not always as they seem; the first appearance deceives many." Recently, I have found that to be true in nature.

An eagle's nest on Stewart Pond in Hadley is one example. Two adults built the nest in early April, then sat on it for several weeks, only to abandon it in June. NYSDEC Endangered Species Specialist Peter Nye said that it is not unusual for first year nesters to fail, but they almost always return to the territory and nest the next year and "do their thing." We'll keep an eye on it. Last spring we observed a pair of Osprey building a nest on a power pole on Rt. 4 in Fort Edward. Nest building is an important ritual in attracting a mate, as the males bring in the building materials to the female. These large stick nests, sometimes five feet in diameter, can be works of art. The Osprey worked on the nest in May and June of 2008 but were not successful at nesting. National Grid removed the nest from the pole, built a platform, and replaced the nest at the site. The Osprey returned briefly to the nest this spring, but again did not use it. Another disappointment, and another nest we'll watch.

Earlier this year we were happy to see a flock of Pine Siskins and American Goldfinches at our feeder. Shortly after their arrival, we discovered that two of them had died. A neighbor found that one was near death in her yard, and several more reports of sick or dead birds were discovered in our area. I contacted Cornell Lab of Ornithology after learning that the cause was an outbreak of Salmonella. I was told that a large number of Pine Siskins moved into the southeastern US last winter, and that these species are highly susceptible to the bacteria, especially in the spring. Because the bacteria are transmitted through fecal contamination of food and water, we are advised to clean our feeders on a regular basis. This involves washing them with soapy water, then soaking them in a 10% bleach solution (1 part bleach to 9 parts water). Sick birds appear thin and

### New Location!

**Beginning September 30, our public programs will be held at the Crandall Library in City Park, Glens Falls. Enter at the Glen St. entrance, and take the elevator to the lower level; the media room is on the left.**

### Public Programs:

**Sept. 30<sup>th</sup> 7:00PM "One Couples Adventures Living Lightly on the Earth" with Ruth & Sandy Lamb**

**Oct. 21<sup>st</sup> 7:00PM "The Emerald Jungle" with Biologist/Naturalist Howard Romack**

**Nov. 18<sup>th</sup> 7:00PM "Hawaii" with Don Polunci a photo tour of Maui, Kauai and the Big Island.**

### **ELECTION NOTICE**

SAAS fall elections will be held

**October 21, 2009 ~ 7pm**

at the Crandall Library in City Park, Glens Falls

There are three Board of Director positions open. Please email or call any board member or officer to place a name on the ballot for one of these positions.

fluffed up; some have swollen eyelids, and might be easy to approach. Be aware of this disease as winter approaches and birds congregate at your feeder. If you see diseased birds, take down your feeders for two weeks. Finally, do not handle sick or dead birds, as the Salmonella strains can be dangerous to humans, and be sure to wash your hands thoroughly after handling the feeders.

While walking the Betar Byway in South Glens Falls in July, I observed a gray fox eating mulberries from a nearby tree. I returned with my camera and was able to photograph him. I sent the photo to Bob Henke who writes a wildlife column for the Post Star. His reply follows:

“Nice photo, but things don't look good for this youngster. The (defect in the) ear is the thickening of the skin typical of sarcoptic mange. You can see the fur loss starting on the tail as well. By fall, if he hasn't gone blind and starved, hypothermia will get him. I would guess he was acting pretty unwary too. One effect of the intense skin irritation is a closing of the ear canals so their ability to hear decreases greatly. Really unpleasant disease. Doesn't cause too much trouble unless the populations of canids (foxes and coyotes) gets pretty dense, then they spread it among themselves until the population crashes, then things are ok for a while.”

I am happy to report that new people have stepped forward to express an interest in serving on our board.

Board members have compiled a list of volunteer opportunities so that you can help make SAAS a better chapter. Please consider giving some of your time; we will all benefit.

This is my final President's report. I would like to thank everyone who made my four years a great experience. I am especially grateful to the officers and board of directors. I have enjoyed my affiliation with Southern Adirondack Audubon, and look forward to watching it grow.

Don Polunci, President.



## Membership Notes

by Pat Fitzgerald



**Welcome to new chapter supporters!**

Dan Furbish	Lithia Springs, GA
Earl M. Ballou	Porter Corners
Dale Dickinson	Fort Edward
Jackie Elder	South Glens Falls
Steve & Lee Howard	Saratoga Springs
Lisa M. Schmidt	Gansevoort

Although it has been a slow summer for new memberships, several people joined SAAS at the Moreau Family Fun Days so we now have 117 chapter supporters.

We appreciate your continued support of the local conservation efforts and environmental education. I believe there are at least 100 more people in our large southern Adirondack area that are interested in local conservation and environmental education and would be happy to support the efforts of this chapter.

Let your friends know what we are doing. When you finish reading this issue of *The Fledgling*, pass it on to someone. Perhaps they would be inspired to help us protect the Fort Edward Grasslands IBA, join us on a field trip, or attend a program. Gift memberships are available and may be purchased for anyone in any location, not necessarily in the local area.

Annual dues (\$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 payable to SAAS.



**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](mailto:pfitz_007@yahoo.com) or 518-792-6846



# Fall 2009 Field Trips!

## Saturday September 19

### **Amphibians, Reptiles & Insects**

Explore Washington County's Park Lauderdale with Biologist Howard Romack; keep your eyes open for critters that hop, crawl, slither and fly! Bag a lunch and enjoy live animal displays at the picnic shelter afterwards – including an endangered Spotted Turtle!

*Trip Limited - Registration required.*

Trip: 9:30 AM 'til Noon

Contact: Laurie 518-955-8301

## Sunday September 20

### **Monthly Coffee Walk**

An easy walk on the Betar Byway, a paved path along the Hudson River. Spend a casual Morning observing the various birds along the way. An experienced birder will be along to help identify the birds we see. Join us for coffee at the Peppermill Restaurant afterwards.

Trip: 8am till 10 am

Contact Pat Walters 518-793-1960.

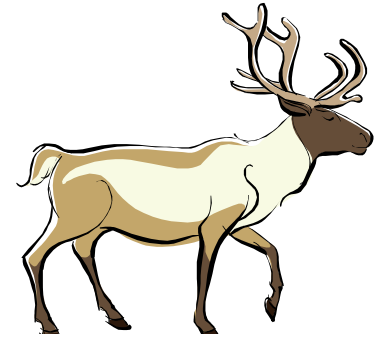
## Sunday September 27

### **Birding by Car**

Drive along the Towpath, a gravel road (Hudson Falls) varied habitat. Excellent variety of birds. We can stop along the way to get a closer look.

Trip: Noon–2 pm

Contact Pat Walters 518-793-1960.



## Saturday October 17

### **Canoe/Kayak the Battenkill River**

Easy guided paddle downstream into Eldridge Marsh provided by Battenkill Valley Outdoors of Cambridge. Likely sightings include herons & migratory waterfowl. Shuttle back to the Lodge for a gourmet lunch featuring local farm products by Spoonful Catering.

Can't do the paddle?

Join us for lunch anyway.

*Trip & Lunch Limited; Registration required.*

#### **Cost:**

Shuttle only (own kayak/ canoe)	\$10
Kayak, solo	\$35
Canoe, tandem	\$50
Lunch, Adult	\$15
Lunch, Child (10 & under)	\$10

Trip: 8:30 AM 'til Noon; Lunch follows

Contact: Laurie 518-955-8301

## Saturday October 24

### **Monthly Coffee Walk**

See September 20 for details.

Trip: 8am till 10am

Contact Pat Walters 518-793-1960.

## Saturday November 21

### **Monthly Coffee Walk**

See September 20 for details.

Trip: 8am till 10am

Contact Pat Walters 518-793-1960.

## Volunteer Corner



**NatureFest at Moreau Lake State Park:** volunteers needed September 26, 2009 for 2 hour shifts between 10am and 4pm at the Audubon booth. No experience necessary. Please contact Pat Walters at 518-793-1960 or [birdladycamper@aol.com](mailto:birdladycamper@aol.com)

**Assist publicity chair-**design posters for monthly programs. Familiarity with Microsoft Word, Microsoft Publisher, or similar program helpful but not necessary. Time commitment: a few hours a month. Write and distribute press releases for select events throughout the year. Experience writing press releases helpful but not required. Time commitment: a few hours, 2-3 times throughout the year. If interested in one or both of these activities, please contact Jason at (518) 480-4243 or [adk\\_wild\\_jay@yahoo.com](mailto:adk_wild_jay@yahoo.com).

**The Field Trip Committee** is looking for people to lead or co-lead field trips, recruit naturalists as trip leaders, or e-mail trip information to the newsletter editor, webmaster, and participants. If you enjoy being outdoors or watching birds and any of these tasks sounds inviting, contact Laurie LaFond at [laf27.media@yahoo.com](mailto:laf27.media@yahoo.com) or 518 955-9301 for more information.

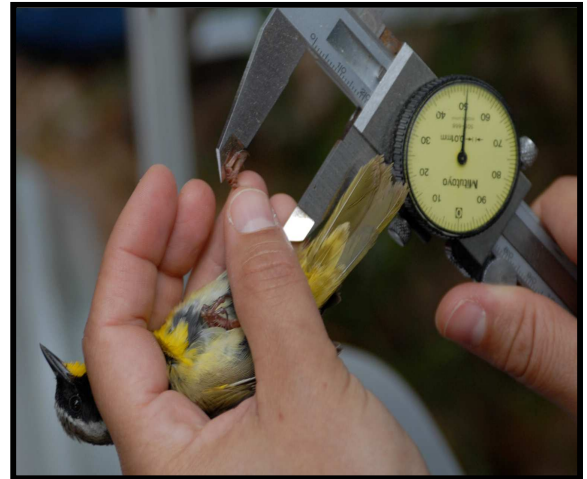
**There are many events** in which our chapter could participate, however, we sometimes lack the necessary people power! We'd like to maintain a list of members who would be willing to occasionally give a few hours of their time to help the chapter. Perhaps you would like to help kids make bird feeders, or you could hand out brochures at tabling events or open houses. If you think you'd like to help out occasionally, please contact Pat Walters at 518-793-1960 to have your name added to our growing list of those who support SAAS.

### 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!

## PCB Study Field Work, Hadley Park with Sara DeLeon-June 10, 2009



Sara DeLeon, a PhD candidate at Cornell University, has been studying the effects of PCBs on birdsong. Her studies have focused on Song Sparrows and Black-Capped Chickadees found near the Hudson River. The concern is that because the females are attracted to the males with the best songs, PCB-exposed birds, if their songs are compromised, might lose out on mates. This could pose serious problems for bird populations. Because some SAAS members helped fill feeders at both Hudson Pointe in Queensbury and at Hadley Park, to attract the birds for her project, Sara graciously agreed to let us watch her work in the field. Six participants observed Sara catch birds in a mist net in Hadley Park. Nature doesn't always co-operate; sparrows and chickadees were unavailable that day. Sara was happy to net a Chestnut-sided Warbler and a Common Yellowthroat to demonstrate her work. She weighed the birds, took blood samples from the brachial artery, collected feather samples, and explained banding techniques. We were given the opportunity to hold them and to try out her recording equipment. Sara's knowledge, enthusiasm, and demonstrations made this a fascinating and enjoyable outing.

## Birdathon 2009

The week of May 21<sup>st</sup> was the time frame for this year's Birdathon. For this event each species is counted. For the Christmas Bird Count each individual bird is counted and recorded.

There were 14 participants and they came up with some amazing lists. A total of 106 species were recorded. New species this year: Great Egret, Pectoral Sandpiper, Worm-eating Warbler and Mourning Warbler. This is what citizen science is all about. I would like to thank each of them for their contributions.

The following are the individual birders and some of their significant sightings.

Joan and Bob Stevens birded the Wilton Wildlife Preserve. They had 38 species with the Northern Parula being one of the most impressive. Beth Lapan birded the Harford and Kingsbury areas and had 17 species.

The Fullers of South Glens Falls had 13 species.

Melissa Brewer and Jessie Curtis birded the Chestertown area and had 46 species, with a Black-Throated Green Warbler, Pine Siskin, Barred Owl, and Common Loon as their highlights. Thanks to Melissa for her monetary contribution.

Joan Robertson (including birds seen near home), Pat Fitzgerald, and Linda White birded the Saratoga Battlefield and their most unusual species were: Northern Harrier, Warbling Vireo, Blue-winged Warbler, and Worm-eating Warbler.

Laurie LaFond had 55 species including an American Bittern, Green Heron, Solitary Vireo and Warbling Vireo.

Linda Hoyt birded the Brant Lake area and other sections of the Adirondacks. She had 57 species, including: Purple Finch, Wood Duck, Broad winged Hawk, Barred Owl, Chestnut-sided, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Pine Warbler, and Black and White Warbler.

Jason Goldsmith had 77 species with the following significant species: Peregrine Falcon, Upland Sandpiper, Whip-poor-will, Chimney Swift, Fish Crow, Brown Thrasher, and Mourning Warbler.

Mona Bearor had the record with a total of 97 species. In addition she had a pledge total of \$335.70.

Way to go Mona and special thanks for such a wonderful donation!

Her list includes just about anything you can see around here but the highlights are: Osprey, Peregrine Falcon, Spotted Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Chimney Swift, Great Horned Owl, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Marsh Wren, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Fish Crow, Blackburnian Warbler, and Swamp Sparrow.



## Editor's Memo

This is my first issue as editor of the Fledgling. I have moved to this area after living in Pennsylvania for over 20 years. In Pennsylvania, I was active in the local Audubon chapter as well as a local environmental organization.



When I started attending the SAAS programs and board meetings I was impressed at the dedication and drive of all the Board Members. Especially Don Polunci, and Mona Bearor.

When I learned that Mona Bearor was stepping down as Editor after 8 years, I thought about it and agreed to assume the duties as no one else had come forward. She has done a superb job and I can attest there is a lot of work involved in putting this newsletter together.

You may have noticed a volunteer theme throughout this newsletter. Volunteers are the backbone of any organization.

I hope you will seriously consider volunteering your time and expertise to enable the SAAS to continue it's excellent work for it's members and the environment.

A very special thank you to Don Polunci, who in October will have served his 4 year term as president, but has assured us he will remain active in SAAS. And to Mona Bearor who has been invaluable and more than patient in my transition to editor. Thank you also to Joan Rech, who assisted me in putting this issue together.

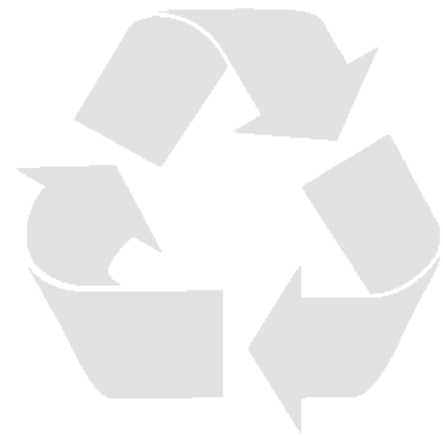
Pat Walters

## *The Fledgling*

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### **Audubon Adventures Program**

The education of our youth about the wonders and appreciation of the natural world has been one of our most important goals. Since 1985 SAAS members have sponsored the National Audubon Society's [Audubon Adventures Program](#) classes to enhance an interdisciplinary Nature Study program for grades 4-6. Many area schools from Minerva to Hudson Falls to South Glens Falls and in between have participated. Materials include a bi-monthly newspaper for the students and an informative teacher resource Manual. We are open to sponsoring any classroom in our chapter area; please contact any board member for more information

## Happy Endings!



When Lainie Angel, a licensed wildlife rehabilitator from Bolton Landing and member of North Country Wild Care, called us on July 31, we could hear the concern in her voice. "I have a Chimney Swift here, and I am in dire need of finding an active colony to place it in." Chimney Swifts cannot be raised alone, and this one would not gape (open its mouth to feed). This bird had been found two days earlier in Ft. Edward, near a building that had been torn down.

After several phone calls and emails, and a posting on the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club site, we had a few leads. Two people in our area had observed swifts in Glens Falls near the First Baptist Church. Don and I went there at dusk and soon discovered approximately 20 of them circling and

feeding on insects. We were elated to see four Chimney Swifts enter a chimney at the church. The next day we met Lainie and another volunteer from North Country Wild Care. Several phone calls for assistance were made, permission was granted from the church Trustee, and the swift was placed in the chimney. Success!

Often described as a "flying cigar", Chimney Swifts rarely perch. They eat, drink, and break off twigs for their nests on the wing. They even bathe by dipping into water as they fly over it. Swifts use their long claws and tail bristles to cling to the walls of chimneys. Recent changes in chimney design have decreased the available nest sites, which may be a factor in declining population numbers. Chimney Swift towers are being built to provide alternate housing. Lainie is planning to build one in the future.

Lainie wonders if " maybe we should be encouraging these insectivores because our other important insectivore, the Little Brown Bat, is suffering significant population loss due to disease. Chimney swifts feed during the day, while bats feed at night so there are likely differences in the insects they feed on (beetle vs. moth); regardless, the swifts' decline will result in a change in the number of insects in the environment."

Thank you to everyone involved, especially to North Country Wild Care for their good work.

Nan Polunci

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SAAS wishes to thank Mrs. Srygley's Fourth Grade Class at Jackson Heights Elementary School for participating in National Audubon Society's "Pennies for the Planet" campaign.

The students chose to help an ongoing project restoring nesting sites for Atlantic Puffins off the coast of Maine. Mrs. Srygley said the class loved learning about this colorful seabird, enthusiastically raising a total of \$67.67, plus a variety of foreign coins, Monopoly money... and one pop tart. A big thank you to each and every one of you!

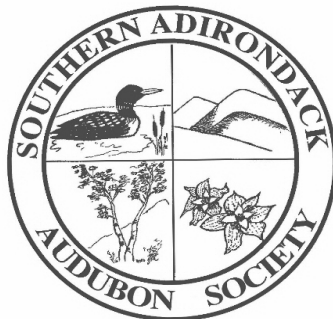


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# The Fledgling

6 Edgewood Drive  
 South Glens Falls NY 12803



Editor: Pat Walters  
 518-793-1960  
 SAASfledgling@hotmail.com  
 Contributors:  
 Laurie LaFond  
 Don Polunci  
 Nan Polunci

## SOUTHERN ADIRONDACK AUDUBON SOCIETY

President	Don Polunci	nanandon@gmail.com
Vice-President	Laurie LaFond	518-955-8301
Secretary	Linda Hoyt	518-494-2380
Treasurer	Virginia Vogel	518-584-3936
Newsletter Editor	Pat Walters	SAASfledgling@hotmail.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

<b>2006-2009</b>	
Mona Bearor	745-8637
Pat Fitzgerald	792-6846
Jason Goldsmith	480-4243
<b>2007-2010</b>	
Laurie LaFond	955-8301
Nancy Polunci	793-1531
Ginny Vogel	584-3936
<b>2008-2011</b>	
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 Pat Walters at 518-793-1960.*