



# The Fledgling

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

Vol. 27 No. 2

Dec 2009 – Feb 2010

## President's Message

As a member of the National Audubon Society for many years, I am pleased to have been appointed chapter president.

I relocated to South Glens Falls last year from Northeast Pennsylvania. While a resident of Pennsylvania, I served on the Northeast Pennsylvania Audubon Society as Vice-president, and as a trustee of Lacawac Sanctuary, a 500 acre nature preserve dedicated to conservation and preservation.

One of the many benefits of belonging to an organization such as ours is meeting the people who support it; people who have similar interests and concerns about the environment and the natural world.

I look forward to meeting and speaking with you at our public programs, on field trips, or through e-mail or telephone. Please do not hesitate to call or e-mail me if you have a question, concern, or just want to share a special birding or natural world experience. And if you have some free time and would like to join our growing number of volunteers, we would love to have you.

Pat Walters

[Birdladycamper@aol.com](mailto:Birdladycamper@aol.com) – 518-793-1960

## SAAS Board of Directors

### Winter Meeting Schedule set

Sun., Jan 17	1:00pm-3:00pm
Sun., Feb 21	1:00pm-3:00pm
Fri., Mar 19	10:00am-12:00pm

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!

## SAAS Calendar

Our public programs are 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.

In case of inclement weather please call the library at 792-6508

## Public Programs

January 27<sup>th</sup> 7:00 PM

### *Beyond Plastic: It's Dangers for our Environment and Human Health.*

A talk and slide presentation by Tim Scherbatskoy

Tim Scherbatskoy will discuss how we have become inundated with plastic,

Tim is an Associate Professor of Biology, Adirondack Community College. He studies and advocates sustainability, teaching how we can become more alert to the environmental consequences of our daily choices and be happy in this awareness.

February 24<sup>th</sup> 7:00PM

### *"Thru-Hiking the Appalachian Trail"*

A talk about Steve Mackey's thru-hike of the Appalachian Trail

March 24<sup>th</sup> 7PM

### *"Parrot Licks and Bioreserves of Peru"*

A talk and slide presentation by Howard Romack

# The Fort Edward Grasslands Important Bird Area

The Fort Edward Grasslands Important Bird Area (IBA) is a 13,000 acre Agricultural grassland complex located in the towns of Ft. Edward, Argyle, and Kingsbury. The IBA contains working farms, grassland areas, cultivated fields, Small woodlots, and wetlands.

The site is the largest intact grassland habitat in eastern New York and is vital for grassland birds, many of whose populations across North America have plummeted in recent years due to habitat loss. High quality grassland acreage in New York State has been rapidly decreasing due to fragmentation and urban sprawl.

- The IBA hosts many summer breeding bird species, including Northern Harrier, Upland Sandpiper, Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Bobolink, and Eastern Meadowlark.
- The IBA is also an important raptor wintering area. Species commonly found include Northern Harrier, Short-eared Owl, and Rough-legged Hawk. Non-raptor species that depend on the grasslands include Snow Bunting, Horned Lark, and Lapland Longspur.
- Other interesting sightings in the IBA have included: Merlin, Snowy Owl, Brown Thrasher, Northern Shrike, Blue-winged Warbler, Dickcissel, and Orchard Oriole.

Nearly all acreage in the IBA is privately owned. Pressure from residential development has put this special place at risk for not only the grassland birds, but for residents who value their rural lifestyle.

You can help by getting involved with Southern Adirondack Audubon Society's efforts to save the Fort Edward Grasslands Important Bird Area. Please visit our website for the latest information.

<http://www.southernadirondackaudubon.org/FtEdMonitoring.html>

Birding in the Ft. Edward IBA? Please consider entering your data at [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org) . This online database will help keep track of the locations and numbers of birds using the IBA.

# We need your help!



Short-eared Owl - Endangered

What we do **now** will determine the fate of this critical area.

If the current proposal for development is approved, it will make it even more difficult to protect this area in the future.



Upland Sandpiper - Threatened

Photos by Gordon Ellmers

For over five years SAAS has been working to protect the Ft. Edward Grasslands Important Bird Area (IBA) from being destroyed by development.



Northern Harrier - Threatened

**Please help us continue this important conservation effort!**

**Donations are fully tax-deductable.**

Please make your check payable to Southern Adirondack Audubon Society (note "IBA Conservation Fund" on check)

and mail to:

Virginia Vogel, Treasurer  
18 Newton Ave.  
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

**Thank you!**

## Volunteer Corner

### 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).



### Bird feeders provide valuable data

Citizen science—the gathering of useful scientific data by regular citizens, rather than by biologists or ornithologists—is an integral part of many research projects sponsored by Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

By collecting information from thousands of backyard bird watchers, a huge database can be amassed more quickly, over a wider area, and at less cost than using field biologists. You can be a part of this by simply watching your feeders and reporting the data.

Project Feederwatch opened for the season on November 14; however, you can still join by signing up at [www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw). This five-month effort gathers data which help track winter movements of bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance. You choose the days of the week you want to record the birds at your feeders, and you report the highest numbers for each species to Cornell. There is a \$15 fee to participate which helps with the huge cost of recording and processing the data.

If you can't commit to a winter-long project, but do want to contribute, get ready for the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) which will take place on Friday, February 12, through Monday, February 15. Last year's count tallied 93,000 checklists and was the continent's largest instantaneous snapshot of bird populations ever recorded. You can count as little as 15 minutes on one of the count days, or all day all four days! Results are entered online—what could be easier? More information can be found at the GBBC website [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc).

Participating in these research projects is a great way to pass the winter days and learn more about the birds at your feeder, as well as contributing to important citizen science!

## Earth Day

## 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

## April 22, 2010

SAAS has many opportunities for volunteers to share their expertise and knowledge, make new friends and perhaps learn new skills.

We have a small dedicated pool of volunteers whose time is limited by their current involvement and commitments to SAAS projects. We need your help and support to continue and expand our efforts.

Please review the many activities and projects listed on the following page. This is your organization and you can make a difference.

For more information contact Pat Walters at 793-1960.

**The Southern Adirondack Audubon Society**  
**is a nonprofit organization dedicated to conservation through education.**

**Education/ Activities:**

- Nature and environmental education programs @ Crandall Library - free & open to the public (usually fourth Wednesday of month except July, August & December) - topics include:
  - “Aloha Hawaii” by SAAS President & Photographer Don Polunci
  - “Living off the Grid” by Ruth & Sandy Lamb
  - “Photographing Birds” by wildlife photographer Gordon Ellmers
  - “Invasive Plants” by ecological consultant Drew Monthie
- Special Programs:
  - “Short-eared Owls” - PowerPoint by SAAS President & Photographer Don Polunci (presented to elementary school children, adults, senior centers, & other organizations)
- Workshops - sponsored at no charge by SAAS and open to the public - previous include:
  - Building Bluebird houses - by NYS Bluebird Society (\$5 materials fee to Bluebird Society)
  - Winter Tracking - with naturalist Vince Walsh of Kawing Crow Awareness Center (co-sponsored and hosted by Wilton Wildlife Preserve)
- Field Trips - free & open to the public – previous include:
  - Spring birding at Merck Forest - with SAAS Board member Laurie LaFond & Pat Walters
  - Washington County Waterfowl Tour - jointly with Hudson Mohawk Birding Club
  - Winter Birds of the Ft. Edward Grasslands IBA – with SAAS Board member Jason Goldsmith
  - Birding at Gull Bay Nature Preserve – with SAAS Board member Ramona Bearor
- Audubon Adventures – fun, colorful educational magazines & activities for elementary school ages produced by National Audubon Society; sponsored by SAAS for schools and local home schoolers
- Annual Sponsorship – pay for selected youth to attend week-long summer camp at DEC’s Camp Colby
- Quarterly newsletter: “The Fledgling”
- Website: [www.southernadironackaudubon.org](http://www.southernadironackaudubon.org)

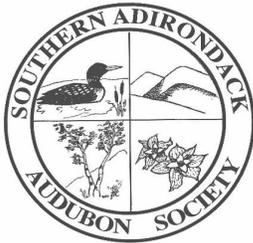
**Conservation:**

- Attend/speak at town meetings on conservation-related issues; Examples:
  - Fort Edward Grasslands IBA; Re: development; \*designated “critical” habitat for endangered Short-eared Owls and other threatened, at-risk and declining grassland bird species - Status: Ongoing
  - Cedar Swamp big box store; Re: development; \*protection of watershed, wetlands – (\*Wal-Mart agreed to reduce impacted wetlands from 7 acres to .2 acres)  
Status: Monitoring will continue
- Bird Monitoring/Surveys
  - Endangered, threatened, at-risk and declining species of the Fort Edward Grasslands Important Bird Area (Winter Raptors, breeding songbirds, etc.)
  - Peregrine Falcons nesting in SAAS geographic region
  - Bird Atlas 2000 - a 5-year monitoring project that resulted in the Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State
  - Kestrel Project, build, place and monitor Kestrel nest boxes
- Bird Counts – Christmas Bird Count, Great Backyard Bird Count, Birdathon (it’s fun!)

**Area served: Warren, Washington & Northern Saratoga counties; parts of Essex and Hamilton counties**

# The Fledgling

6 Edgewood Drive  
South Glens Falls NY 12803



Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Glens Falls, NY  
Permit No.81

Vol. 27 No. 2 – Winter 2010

## SOUTHERN ADIRONDACK AUDUBON SOCIETY

President	Pat Walters	518-793-1960
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.southernadironackaudubon.org	
email SAAS:	audubon@netheaven.com	

Editor: Pat Walters - 518-793-1960 [SAASfledgling@hotmail.com](mailto:SAASfledgling@hotmail.com)

Contributors: Laurie LaFond, Mona Bearor, Jason Goldsmith

### DIRECTORS

#### **2009-2012**

Mona Bearor	745-8637
Carol Moyer	793-1960
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 Pat Walters at 518-793-1960.