



The Fledgling

Newsletter of the Southern Adirondack Audubon Society
www.audubon.noncommercial.org

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Mar 2008 – May 2008

President's Message

The Snowy Owl is a large white owl with a rounded head and haunting yellow eyes. This owl lives in the open tundra of the far north and nests on the ground. It preys chiefly on lemmings, hunting by day as well as by night. An immature Snowy Owl with dark bars and spots was first seen flying across the road on Route 42 in Fort Edward by two birders from the Hudson Mohawk Bird Club. The snowy flew into a field and perched on the ground where they were able to observe it clearly with a scope for a long period of time. Several crows were harassing the owl. Several days later, two Audubon New York staff members, conducting a winter raptor survey in the area, also observed the owl. One month later it is still there. It likes to perch on top of the tilted telephone pole to the right of the old silo. The mottling indicates young individuals, which typically come further south than the adults.

The Short-eared Owls have returned to the Fort Edward IBA. Last year many people reported numerous birds in late February. This winter sightings have been sparse and scattered over the area. The owls usually congregate shortly before migrating north. The importance of protecting the Fort Edward Important Bird Area is evident by the sightings. SAAS has been tirelessly working to save this area from threatened urban sprawl. Both Argyle and Fort Edward have passed resolutions supporting a proposed DEC plan for protection of portions of the grasslands by creating a Washington County Grasslands Wildlife Management Area. Fort Edward has appointed ten members to a Conservation Advisory Council as called for in their Master Plan. The CAC will assist the Town Board and Planning Board with decisions that might affect the environment. Several members agree with SAAS' position. The Nature Conservancy has a contract to purchase the Upton farm; this is the property that was used extensively for roosting and hunting by the Short-eared Owls in the winter of 2007. DEC hopes to

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SAAS Calendar

IMPORTANT INFORMATION about the public programs listed below can be found on page four.

March 26
6pm

"Giants of the North Woods"
with Mark Picard

April 5
10:00am

"Eastern Bluebirds"
with Kathy Linker

May 28
7pm

"Glorius Gardens"
with Gerry Lemmo

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purchase land from "willing sellers" and obtain conservation easements in an effort to preserve the area's agricultural habitat.

One of the goals for SAAS this year is to make our chapter more visible in the community. We hope to sponsor programs at new venues such as assisted living facilities, and 4H and Scouting events. We also plan to partner with other groups to achieve this goal. Our first such event is our March program, "Giants of the North Country," given by Mark Picard. We are co-sponsoring this presentation with ACC's College Activity Board. I had the opportunity to attend this program when Audubon's Capital District Chapter and the Hudson Mohawk Bird Club offered it last year, and it was excellent. The "giants" referred to are moose. Mark has been studying and photographing moose for 30 years. His knowledge of animal behavior is impressive, and his photos are stunning. Don't miss this one at the ACC campus.

We are always interested in your ideas and input. If you have any suggestions, comments, or concerns, please contact me.

-Don Polunci

From the Membership Chair -Claire Hunter

MARCH-ing with SAAS:

Twenty-five years ago in March, 1983, a group of about 50 members of National Audubon met in Glens Falls to initiate the organization of a new local chapter.

Goals to be met included recruiting at least 60 new members, starting a newsletter, and choosing a name for the proposed chapter, for which a contest was held. "Southern Adirondack Audubon Society," soon dubbed "SAAS," was chosen at an early meeting, with the winner receiving a box of bird seed.

Soon after, "The Fledgling," our chapter newsletter, took flight, and SAAS was on its way. We hoped that SAAS would survive and be a source of knowledge, fellowship, and environmental awareness for the residents of the chapter area, which includes 29 zip codes in Warren, Washington, and northern Saratoga counties.

GROWING IN MEMBERSHIP, we welcome these new CHAPTER SUPPORTERS: *denotes Gift Membership

Cleverdale – Pat Burke*

Clifton Park – Richard Wilmot

Queensbury – Todd Jorgensen

Valatie – Anna Nadeau

GREEN NOTES—GOOD NEWS! Sincere thanks to the Chapter Supporters who have renewed in response to the green notices inserted in their newsletters! Many of you included additional monetary gifts to the chapter and we thank you for your valuable support.

Gift Memberships: What better way to remember a friend than with a chapter membership? On request, your recipient will receive a card reflecting best wishes for birthday, spring, holiday, or super report card!

Your cards and notes are always welcome. Membership is a people job, and contact with members is the most enjoyable facet of the work.

**"WHEN SPIDER WEBS UNITE,
THEY CAN TIE UP A LION."
-AFRICAN PROVERB**



Clip & Save!

Field Trip Schedule

Enjoy the spring and meet new friends!

Sunday, March 23 – 8:00 am

Hudson River waterfowl with Joyce Miller and Mona Bearor; Join us as we search the Hudson for migrant waterfowl such as Goldeneye, Bufflehead, and Mergansers; last year 13 species of waterfowl were tallied on this trip! Time permitting, we may visit the Fort Edward Grasslands for late winter specialties such as Rough-legged Hawk, Northern Harrier, and Snow Bunting. We will meet at the Schuylerville Central School on Rt. 29 to form a carpool. Dress warmly and bring a beverage or snack. Please contact either Joyce, justlookitup@yahoo.com, or Mona, kinglet@roadrunner.com 745-8637 to register.

Saturday, April 26 – 8:30 pm

Nocturnal Wildlife Walk with Jason Goldsmith
Venture out into the dark as we search for salamanders, frogs, and other wildlife that use the cover of night for their daily routines. Call Jason at 480-4243 for more info and meeting location.

Saturday, May 17 – 8:00am

Gull Bay Preserve with Laurie LaFond
Birding as we walk the trail into the heron rookery. This trip is limited to ten participants because of the sensitive nature of the rookery. When you register with the trip leader, you will be given trip details. Register by calling 518-955-8301 or email Laurie at allofnature@roadrunner.com

Saturday, May 31st – 8:00am

Spring Grasslands Birding with Jason Goldsmith and Laurie LaFond - Join us as we bird through the Important Bird Area of Ft. Edward and Argyle for breeding grassland birds. Possible species include Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, Savannah Sparrow, Upland Sandpiper, Northern Harrier, and more. The number of participants is limited. Call Jason at 480-4243 to register.

A Male Common Goldeneye

One of many species expected on the March 23
Hudson River Waterfowl trip



Photo courtesy of Gordie Ellmers

The 2007 Christmas Bird Count

Submitted by Linda White, count compiler

For the second time in our counts' history, we had to change the date of the count because of inclement weather. We had a large group ready to go on our scheduled date, but with the close proximity to Christmas, many were not able to participate on the "snow date" of December 22nd. Many thanks go out to Dick Bartlett, Mona Bearor, Beth, Brad, and son Nathan Bidwell, Jason Goldsmith (especially for all his time looking for owls), Greg Greene, Russ Hilliard, and Joan Robertson, for their dedication and day in the field. We had a great count with many highlights.

Ruddy Duck, Redhead, and Fish Crow are three species new to our count—we've been counting since 1983—and they have been flagged as unusual species. Here is the list of birds that were spotted that day and night. The count results for our Hudson Falls count (count code NYHF) can be found on the Audubon Site, www.audubon.org/bird/cbc.

Redhead 1, White-winged Scoter 4, Common Goldeneye 168, Hooded Merganser 17, Ruddy Duck 3, Wild Turkey 14, Bald Eagle 1, Northern Harrier 2, Sharp-shinned Hawk 1, Cooper's Hawk 4, Rough-legged Hawk 20, American Kestrel 1, Merlin 1, Peregrine Falcon 1, Herring Gull 2, Rock Pigeon 1235, Mourning Dove 328, Barred Owl 1, Short-eared Owl 1, Red-bellied Woodpecker 4, Downy Woodpecker 26, Hairy Woodpecker 9, Northern Flicker 6, Pileated Woodpecker 13, Northern Shrike 2, Blue Jay 134, American Crow 870, Fish Crow 1, Horned Lark 78, Black-capped Chickadee 222, Tufted Titmouse 76, Red-breasted Nuthatch 3, White-breasted Nuthatch 18, Brown Creeper 1, Golden-crowned Kinglet 3, Eastern Bluebird 72, American Robin 211, Northern Mockingbird 8, European Starling 2943, Cedar Waxwing 59, American Tree Sparrow 287, Song Sparrow 8, White-throated Sparrow 8, Dark-eyed Junco 134, Snow Bunting 158, Northern Cardinal 36, Pine Grosbeak 6, Purple Finch 4, House Finch 90, Common Redpoll 211, American Goldfinch 64, Evening Grosbeak 8, and House Sparrow 219. The grand total is 8275 individual birds that were counted and 55 species.



It's Time for Birdathon!

by Joan Robertson

Thursday, May 8, through Monday, May 12, 2008, has been designated as SAAS Birdathon 2008

Birdathon is one of the more important and most interesting activities of Southern Adirondack Audubon. During this period of peak migration we try to cover all the territory in the chapter to seek out birds nesting or passing through on their way north. It is an ongoing attempt to learn how each of the species is faring and which ones seem to be getting more scarce. We would like a more accurate accounting of how our area is used by warbler species; please make an extra effort to search for them along the edges of wood lots and in abandoned fields and orchards. Drive slowly, windows open, and *listen* for the calls!

Pick the day and times that are most convenient for you, and enjoy some time in the field in search of birds. The event is open to all, no matter what level of birding you do. Half a day is fine or, if you are more energetic, you can bird from dawn to dusk. So pack a lunch, grab your binoculars, get a birding buddy and help us with this annual attempt to gauge the variety of our bird population. We ask that you stay within the

chapter boundaries - Warren, Washington, Northern Saratoga counties.

It would be helpful to the tabulator to know the general places you covered and the weather/temperature. You should make a note of each species and compile a list for the day. Remember, in this survey we are counting species, not numbers of individual birds as in the Christmas Count. If you want to use Birdathon as a fund raiser for the our chapter, ask friends and neighbors to pledge a few cents/ quarters/ dollars for each species you identify. Many people would like to help in this low-participatory way. Notify Joan Robertson at 656-9223 of your bird count numbers, and your fund raising amount, as soon after the Count Days as possible, ensuring complete record tabulation for printing in the June newsletter. Lists should be sent to Joan Robertson, PO Box 51, Cleverdale, NY 12820.

Editor's Ramblings

As Editor, I would like to let you in on a little secret about *The Fledgling*. Are you ready? Ok, here it is....

"It's YOUR newsletter!"



Yes, the newsletter is for the members, and should reflect the interests of the members. Many of us who write for the newsletter are birders first, so that's what we write about. Diverse content will improve the quality of this publication, so help us improve future issues by submitting articles, poetry, or essays on any natural history topic. We are also planning to include more information in future issues that will help you "Go Green." Many of you are adopting greener lifestyles and we'd like to hear from you; we can all benefit by sharing tips on water conservation, as well as the Three R's – Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle.

This issue is packed with interesting reading—Linda White's Christmas Bird Count report, Joan Robertson's notice on upcoming Birdathon, Field trip reports, and Rich Merritt's update on the winter raptor monitoring. Be sure to read the article on page eight about the dangers of wood smoke by Laurie LaFond, our newest SAAS board member. Laurie has done an incredible amount of research on this topic and you will learn things that will surprise you. I've written a review of my favorite birding desk reference – and challenge you to review yours for our next issue! Do not miss the article by Hope Batcheller on her recently formed New York State Young Birders Club; our state will benefit from a new generation of birders and this 15-year-old is a real go-getter!

A few random thoughts from recent out-of-state travel... While at Biddeford Pool in Maine a few weeks back, a local birder was telling me of her adventures in late winter of 2007. She came here to see the Short-eared Owls in Fort Edward. That really drove home the fact that protection of these birds is for everyone, not just those of us fortunate enough to have them nearby. Recently, I flew over North Carolina, heading for Charlotte and was appalled by the number and extent of red scars on the land, as the few remaining forested areas are sacrificed to man's greed for huge homes; carefully planned networks of cul-de-sacs appear as strangely coiled millipedes when they are viewed from the air. Each time I fly over the east coast, I wonder whether I am alone in my grief, or whether any fellow passengers are mourning the loss of habitat as I am.

One last reminder..... don't forget to celebrate
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*** Special Program Information ***

The March 26 program, "Giants of the North Woods" with Marc Picard, will be held in Miller Auditorium, Dearlove Hall, on the ACC campus, at 6pm. Dearlove Hall is on the north end of the campus on Bay Rd. Please plan to attend this program on the amazing moose.

On April 5, at 10:00am, Kathy Linker of the New York State Bluebird Society will present a program on the natural history of the Eastern Bluebird. This program will be held in the main hall of the Moreau Community Center, 144 Main, St, So. Glens Falls, NY. The video and lecture will be followed by a workshop at which participants can, for a fee of \$5, build a bluebird nestbox from a kit. The lecture is free and open to all; however, you will need to register for the workshop by calling Mona at 745-8637. Come alone or bring your kids or grandkids!

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St Patrick's Day by GOING GREEN! See the ad for our new SAAS canvas tote on page nine. I keep a couple of them in my car and use them daily. We CAN make a difference!

-Mona Bearor

Winter Field Trip Reports

WASHINGTON COUNTY GRASSLANDS

Saturday, January 26

The SAAS Winter Raptor Field Trip was a great success, drawing seven enthusiastic beginning and veteran bird-watchers, in addition to the two co-leaders. Excited participants are probably still talking about the highlight of the trip - a close encounter with a Red-tailed Hawk!

Moderate temperatures, lots of sunshine, and little wind made for a pleasant morning outing as we traveled a shortened version of the official IBA survey route.

We saw about a dozen Rough-legged Hawks, half a dozen Red-tailed Hawks, a flock of about 20 Snow Buntings, and one American Kestrel.

We were very fortunate to spot a Merlin that remained perched atop a telephone pole long enough for everyone to get a good look through binoculars and the spotting scope; it even allowed photos!

The Red-tailed Hawk encounter occurred about half an hour into the trip (good timing, Jason!). We happened upon a couple of bird banders working for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). They had just trapped the 4-5-year-old male Red-tailed seen in the photo. They not only allowed us to observe and take photos while they recorded data such as the hawk's sex and weight (roughly 2.2 pounds), but also explained things like how they determined its age. This hawk had been banded previously, as had his mate, who weighed over three pounds (female raptors are about one third larger than males).

Everyone seemed to have a good time, and we are all looking forward to the next birding field trip.

by Laurie LaFond, Co-leader with Jason Goldsmith



SNOWSHOE HIKE AT DENTON PRESERVE

Saturday, February 23



Although we didn't see many bird species, our snowshoe field trip in the Denton Wildlife Sanctuary was enjoyable. Three people accompanied us on the 1.3-mile loop trail the day after a fresh snowfall. It was a great day to be outside!

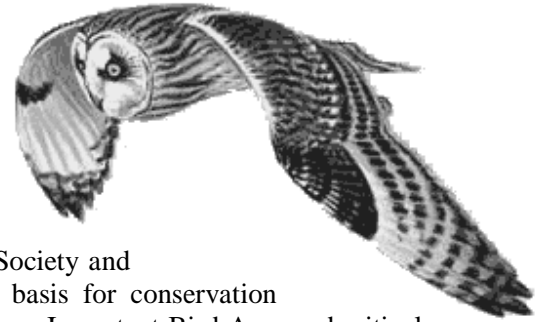
Our most interesting bird sighting was a Ruffed Grouse. We studied lots of tracks, including deer, rabbit, squirrel, and mouse. Unfortunately, we did not see bobcat tracks, despite a spotting on this property last fall.

- Nan and Don Polunci, Co-leaders

Winter Raptor Monitoring Update

by Rich Merritt

Director of Operations and Administration, Audubon New York



The third year of the Fort Edward Grasslands Winter Raptor Survey began during the first week of December and continues through the end of March. This a joint project between Southern Adirondack Audubon Society and Audubon New York and the data are used to offer a sound science basis for conservation decisions at the Fort Edward Grasslands. The Fort Edward Grasslands is an Important Bird Area and critical habitat for both over-wintering birds as well as breeding grassland species.

The survey is divided into three separate routes. The main IBA route is in the southern portion of the IBA while the two northern routes are shorter and are often done in tandem. Chapter members and other volunteers from the community and state office conduct these surveys once a week and each takes between three and four hours on average. Most volunteers have signed up for more than one route during the season, a very generous use of their time. Although the primary focus is on winter raptors, other winter visitors are counted and compiled as well, including many large flocks of Horned Larks and Snow Buntings.

Several significant snowfalls this year have produced results somewhat different from previous years. When there is complete snow cover on the grasslands, Northern Harriers are difficult to find, since they may have moved south toward more productive hunting grounds. Larks, Buntings and (rarely) Lapland Longspurs are easier to identify though, as they pick grit and salt off of recently plowed roads.

In winter, populations of year-round resident raptors such as Red-tailed Hawks and American Kestrels are often augmented by birds from upstate New York and Canada as they move south far enough to have ample hunting opportunities. Species such as Rough-legged Hawk are found in the area only in winter as they breed in faraway northern Canada. The Short-eared Owl, a species that has shown precipitous declines, is relatively abundant on the grasslands in winter. Later in the season, a one-day Short-eared Owl survey will be conducted in an attempt to get the most accurate count of how many individuals are on the IBA (for information on this survey, contact Laura McCarthy, 518-869-9731, lmccarthy@audubon.org). In January and into February, volunteers and local birdwatchers were treated to the presence of a Snowy Owl, another northern denizen, along Route 42. Other species such as Common Redpolls and Northern Shrikes are being seen in greater numbers this year.

This citizen science project is an enjoyable way for those that care about these species to get in a terrific day of birding and to help protect this wonderful resource. For more information, contact Rich Merritt at Audubon New York, 518-869-9731 or rmerritt@audubon.org.

SAAS Behind-the-Scenes

In addition to monthly public programs and winter raptor monitoring—see Rich’s article above— SAAS is involved in many activities of which the members may not be aware. Here is a short list of some of our recent projects:

- Providing *Audubon Adventures* to homeschooling groups in the area
- Reviewing, and sending a letter of comment on, the NYS DEC Draft Guidelines for Conducting Bird and Bat Studies at Commercial Wind Energy Projects
- Following developments on Quaker Road as a “big box” store attempts to locate in Big Cedar Swamp
- Working to protect the Fort Edward Grasslands IBA from unrestrained development
- Fundraising efforts including the sale of both notecards produced from bird photos donated by Gordie Ellmers of Fort Edward, and canvas tote bags with our own SAAS logo. These products are available at our monthly programs. We are also currently raffling a “Green Bag.” This is one of our SAAS totes, filled to overflowing with environmentally friendly products.
- Have you visited our website lately? We are working diligently to expand our website and have recently added a page on raptor identification plus several pages with specifics on birding locations in our chapter area. Our comment letter to DEC may be read online as well. Visit us on the web at www.audubon.noncommercial.org

New York State Young Birders Club

Last November, I started an online Yahoo! group for the young birders of New York State.



Because young birders often feel isolated in a world of older birders, my initial goal was to encourage and connect them. Now that this group has been established for a while, we are expanding it to start a more formal club. The NYS Young Birders Club will provide chances for young birders to meet, learn, and bird together, and will help develop the next generation of naturalists. The New York State Ornithological Association (NYSOA) has agreed to sponsor the club with financial assistance, web-server space, publicity, and adult support.

I got this idea from the Ohio Young Birders Club, which was started in May, 2006. Geared for kids aged 12-18, it offers field trips, a newsletter, an annual conference, and scholarships for camps and events, all based on input from the young birders. Although I would like to have all these opportunities eventually, I think it is best to start small. This year, I hope the club will hold a few field trips and perhaps publish a newsletter by the young birders.

Young birders aged 12-18 will largely run the NYS Young Birders Club, but adult assistance and organization will be invaluable. In Ohio, Kim Kaufman of the Black Swamp Bird Observatory acts as an adult

coordinator, doing the work of editing the newsletter, arranging trips, coordinating with local clubs, and seeking young birder direction. As our club continues to form, we will be searching for adults willing to dedicate time to this endeavor. Stay tuned, and let me know if you want to help!

For more information:

NYS Young Birders listserv:

www.groups.yahoo.com/group/nysyoungbirders

Here, young birders can meet virtually, talk about birds, discuss photo quizzes, and post their recent sightings and identification questions. Please tell all the young birders you know about this!

Ohio Young Birders Club website:

www.ohioyoungbirders.org

This site contains information about the OYBC including their field trips and meetings, membership and contact info, etc.

American Birding Association's young birder homepage: www.aba.org/yb

The ABA has many offerings for young birders, including scholarships, conferences, camps, a contest, newsletter, and listservs. It's a great resource for kids wishing to get more involved in the young birder community.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact me at:
hope.batcheller@gmail.com

-Hope Batcheller, age 15, Petersburg, NY

Editor's Note: The birding community should do all it can to promote interest among young people. The benefits of time spent outside are immeasurable, and a love of the natural world will foster an interest in conservation. An adult coordinator is needed to guide and oversee the group in the planning and implementation of trips and events, publications, and website and logistics, such as insurance, safety and finances. If you would like to be that person, or would like to help these young birders in any way, please contact Hope at her email address listed above or at 250 Rabbit College Rd., Petersburg, NY 12138. Hope is also traveling in May to the Great Texas Birding Classic, as a member of the American Birding Association's Tropicbirds Team. You may sponsor her as she raises funds for the ABA's youth educational activities by submitting a pledge on this webpage:

<http://americanbirding.org/yb/tropicbirds/pledge.html>

Wood Smoke - No Disappearing Act by Laurie LaFond

The smell of burning wood may conjure up fond memories of nights spent around a campfire or fireplace, but wood smoke is a major source of air pollution. The EPA estimates that wood smoke is 12 times more carcinogenic than second-hand cigarette smoke and attacks our body cells up to 40 times longer!

Wood smoke is composed of a mix of harmful gases, wood tars and particles of ash and soot. It contains hundreds of chemicals and compounds (including dioxins*), more than two dozen of which are toxic to human health. More than 90% of wood smoke consists of fine particulates so tiny that thousands would fit on the point of a pin. This fine particulate matter, or PM 2.5, is the biggest threat to human health.

Fine particulates are so small that our bodies cannot filter them out. They carry toxic chemicals deep into our lungs where they can remain for months. Health effects of short-term exposure to wood smoke include stinging eyes, runny nose, respiratory illness, headaches and shortness of breath. It can also aggravate chronic heart and lung diseases; studies have shown that as fine particulate levels rise, premature death rates for people with these conditions rise as well. Long-term exposure to wood smoke has been linked to heart disease and cancers of the nose, throat, lungs, blood and lymph system.

Closed doors and windows cannot filter efficient homes showed concentrations at 50% pollutant. "In some parts of the United States smoke can account for about 80% of the air and children, pregnant woman, the elderly most at risk.

Natural gas, electricity and oil are woodstoves. Outdoor boilers are the matter from burning wood in OWBs 12 times higher than the emissions [Environmental Protection Bureau, Wood Boilers in New York State," Office of the Attorney General.]

If you must burn wood, consider that a properly installed EPA certified wood stove emits 60% - 80% less pollution than a conventional wood stove. "A fire that is burning properly produces little or no smoke from the chimney. If you see a lot of smoke coming from a chimney, that's air pollution." [www.epa.gov/woodstoves/healthier.html] Check out the following EPA page for more information or links to tips to help you reduce your emissions: www.epa.gov/woodstoves/healtheffects.html

You should never burn trash, treated or painted wood, pallets, particle board, plastics, etc.! Burning trash is not only unlawful, it releases even greater amounts of toxic chemicals, such as dioxins*, benzenes, lead and arsenic, into the air we all breathe.

In the words of one NYS Health Department Chief: "Smoke is bad for you. Everyone knows that."

More Information on this topic can be found at:

American Lung Association: www.lungusa.org

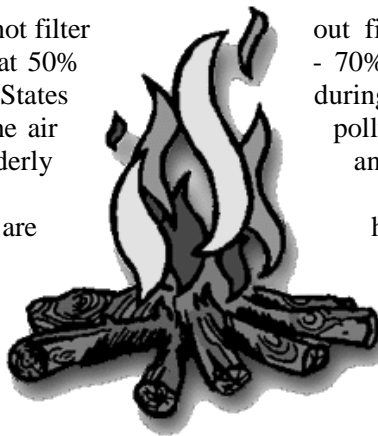
DEC: www.dec.ny.gov/public/32065.html (one of several pages on this topic)

NYS Office of the Attorney General: www.oag.state.ny.us/press/2005/aug/August%202005.pdf (all about OWBs)

Clean Air Revival: www.burningissues.org

Washington State Department of Ecology: www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/air/airhome.html

*Dioxins are some of the most toxic chemicals known to man. They are formed when substances processed with chlorine, such as plastics or even white paper plates and napkins, are burned. Waste-burning incinerators and backyard burn-barrels are a major source of dioxin in the environment. Paper mills that use chlorine bleaching in their process and the production of PVCs and certain chlorinated chemicals (like many pesticides) also contribute to dioxin pollution.



out fine particulates. Even the newest energy- - 70% of the outside level of this dangerous air during a typical wood heating season, wood pollution in a residential area" (EPA). Infants and those with weakened immune systems are

hundreds of times cleaner than fireplaces and worst: "...emissions of fine particulate (outdoor wood boilers) are about four to from indoor wood stoves." "Smoke Gets in Your Lungs: Outdoor October, 2005. State of New York,

National Geographic bumps Sibley!

-a review by Mona Bearor



For many years, the National Geographic “Field Guide to the Birds of North America” has been my choice to carry in the field. On my recent trip to the Rio Grande Birding Festival, I was presented with a free copy of the companion volume, “Complete Birds of North America.”

I was immediately captivated! It was worth hand-carrying this hefty volume home!

With Jonathan Alderfer as Editor, and Jon Dunn as Associate Editor, one would expect this volume to be held to exacting standards—and it does not disappoint. Over 600 pages of text, species illustrations, photos, and maps combine to make this expanded field guide an invaluable birding reference. Whether identifying songbirds in the backyard, or separating gulls by molt pattern, this volume will provide birders with all they require on a daily basis.

This book provides in-depth coverage of 962 species. Family groups are arranged in taxonomic order, each group having an introductory paragraph that details the characteristics of the group, and how those specifics relate to identification in the field. Genera specifics follow, if applicable, and then species details supplemented by feeding, nesting, migration, and behavior facts, making these segments more extensive than those found in a field guide. All this is enhanced by descriptive comparisons with similar species.

The incredible artwork for which National Geographic guides have long been praised is not neglected in this volume. Multiple drawings illustrate plumage variations between sexes or between birds at different stages of molt; subspecies are addressed in both text and illustration when applicable. Excellent photographs accompany each family introduction, and photos are often used to illustrate identification challenges. Species distribution maps are recent updates and are augmented by special maps showing migratory routes or geographic separation of species.

Long a fan of David Sibley’s two “big books”—“The Sibley Guide to Birds” and “The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior”—I have now moved those to the bookshelf above my desk, thus making make room at my elbow for this volume. As one not yet proficient enough to refer to birds by their Latin nomenclature, I was frustrated by the Latin references in the Sibley books. With “Complete Birds of North America”, I can more easily find exactly what I am searching for without the constant need to “translate” family or genus names to those in common usage. Will I discard all those other reference books I have collected? Absolutely not! Each guide has special features making it the only choice in certain situations; however, there is no guide currently available that is comparable to this comprehensive volume as my desk reference of choice.

“Complete Birds of North America”

Published by The National Geographic Society ©2005

Hardcover – 640 pages; 150 color photographs; 4000 illustrations; 750 maps
ISBN: 0792241754

GO GREEN WITH SAAS!

Help support SAAS with the purchase of an environmentally friendly tote bag.

Americans throw away 100 billion plastic bags every year. 14 million trees are cut down a year to produce paper grocery bags. Both cause significant pollution and neither decompose quickly once in a landfill.

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Ginny Vogel	584-3936

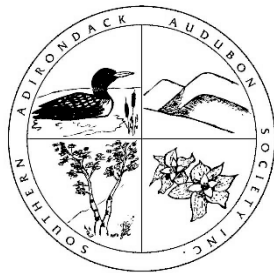
APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

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:
Claire Hunter, 3 Edgewood Dr., South Glens Falls, New York 12803.

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 Barb or Mona at the numbers listed above.

The Fledgling



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