



# The Fledgling

Newsletter of the Southern Adirondack Audubon Society, Inc. (SAAS)

Vol. 36 No. 3, March — May 2019

Visit SAAS at: <http://www.southernadirondackaudubon.org>

## Spring programs: warblers, herons, flying squirrels

On **Wednesday, March 20**, Margaret Fowle of Audubon Vermont will present **“Geolocators and Golden-winged Warbler Tracking”** at **Crandall Library** in downtown Glens Falls at 7:00 p.m.

Light level geolocators allow biologists to track birds on their migration journeys. Mapping the information from these geolocators produces amazing animations of the the bird’s travels across a hemisphere and illustrates the many thousands of miles to reach their breeding and summering grounds.

Blue-winged Warblers fitted with geolocators at the Helen W. Buckner Preserve outside Whitehall, N.Y. and the Sterling Forest State Park in the lower Hudson Valley.

Fowle is a conservation biologist with Audubon Vermont’s Peregrine Falcon Recovery Program and Champlain Valley Bird Initiative. Prior to coming to Audubon in 2009, she coordinated Peregrine and Bald Eagle recovery efforts in Vermont. She also works with private landowners to promote management activities that enhance grassland and shrubland habitats for priority bird species in the Champlain Valley.

Fowle obtained her Master’s degree in wildlife biology from the University of Vermont, where she studied the



The program will show these eye-opening animations and how it is highly useful in developing management practices for conserving these climate-threatened species. Fowle will discuss migration and wintering locations of Golden and



Audubon Vermont provided this series of photos showing the process of applying a geocator “backpack” to a Golden-winged Warbler. The geolocators help track these climate-threatened species as they migrate to their wintering grounds. Cornell Lab of Ornithology reports that populations of these birds in the Appalachian Mountain region has fallen by 98 percent.

population of Double-crested Cormorants on Lake Champlain. She lives in Huntington, Vermont, with her husband Breck and two daughters.

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## Southern Adirondack Audubon Society

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## Board and Committees

### Officers:

President: John Loz  
([president@southernadirondackaudubon.org](mailto:president@southernadirondackaudubon.org))  
Vice-President: OPEN  
Treasurer: Sharon Charbonneau  
Secretary: Margie Amodeo

### Board of Directors

2019-2021 Joyce Miller  
Rob Snell  
Margie Amodeo  
2018-2020 Kim Atkins  
Peyton Atkins

Board meetings are held monthly except July, August and December. Members are invited to attend. Contact John Loz for details.

### Committees:

**Conservation:** OPEN

**Education:** Mona Bearor  
([education@southernadirondackaudubon.org](mailto:education@southernadirondackaudubon.org))

**Membership Secretary:** Lori Barber  
([membership@southernadirondackaudubon.org](mailto:membership@southernadirondackaudubon.org))

**Newsletter:** Joyce Miller  
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**Programs:** John Loz (Interim chair)  
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**Publicity:** Laurel Male  
([publicity@southernadirondackaudubon.org](mailto:publicity@southernadirondackaudubon.org))

Southern Adirondack Audubon Society (SAAS), a certified local chapter of the National Audubon Society, has more than 530 members in Warren, Washington, northern Saratoga and southern Hamilton counties in New York State. SAAS's primary goal is to protect the environment by preserving natural habitats and promoting environmental education. Contact a board member to learn about SAAS volunteer opportunities.

## President's Message

# The tasty colors of birding

By John Loz, SAAS President



I love many things about winter, including snowshoeing in snowy landscapes and looking for Arctic birds flying into our area. I also love a tasty dark brown beer, such as a porter or stout, to drink in front of a roaring fire after a day of winter birding. But spring is here and as the "flavors" of birds change with the warming season, the flavors and colors of the beers I like to drink change, too. A nice, cold golden-colored wheat beer or salty [gose](#), along with colorful warblers migrating back from Central and South America — both suit my tastes in springtime.

This year, SAAS is partnering with [Common Roots Brewing Company](#) to offer fun social birding events where you can learn about the work we do for birds and how we protect our local natural habitats. A healthy natural environment and clean water is well in the [Common Roots Brewing Company](#) ethos. In fact, the brewery's co-founder worked at the Lake Placid Land Conservancy before starting his brewery, so we thought it perfect to partner with a like-minded business we have "common roots" with!

Keep your eyes peeled to our [Facebook](#) page, [website](#), and your email inbox to get the latest announcements of future "Birding and Beer" events you can participate in this year!

## Meet our Volunteers

### Lori Barber

Lori Barber of Lake George is past vice-president of SAAS and currently the Membership Secretary. A native of Lake George and graduate of Lake George schools, Barber is the Assessor of the Town of Lake George. She lives in Lake George with her husband Michael and their two children, Dan and Grace.

Her son Daniel (pictured with her below) started her on her birding journey. He has loved birds since he was two, and has learned to identify birds by their calls. As aspiring Adirondack 46ers, Barber and her son watch and listen to birds as they hike. Birding has enriched her entire family's lives, she said. Their enthusiasm has spread to their relatives, who now have feeders and know many of the birds!

"I love being a member of SAAS and volunteering," Barber said. She and Daniel have volunteered for the last four years at the SAAS table at the Friends of the IBA's Raptor Fest. As a member of the National Honor Society, Daniel also helps his mother with her SAAS membership duties.



Barber's family visits Myrtle Beach every year. They often listen to different bird calls and play a game of trying to identify them on the long ride. They'll also observe new birds in states along the way, such as shorebirds in the Carolinas. Barber and her family plan to visit Hog Island's Audubon Camp in Maine, where Daniel hopes to attend its famous birding camp.

# Spring programs

Continued from page 1

On **Wednesday, April 24**, photographer Rick Bunting will offer “**On Heron Time**” at the **Saratoga Springs Public Library** in downtown Saratoga Springs at 7:00 p.m.

For the past nine years, Bunting has monitored a small Great Blue Heron rookery near his home in the Delaware-Otsego area. His program explores the family life of Great Blue Herons through his photographs and observations of these magnificent birds. He is a Professor Emeritus at the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam, where he served as Chair of Music Education and conductor of the renowned Crane Chorus. Since his retirement from teaching he has devoted a great deal of time to his passion as an amateur naturalist. He enjoys taking pictures of what he sees and sharing them whenever he can.

of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) for more than 30 years.

Although seldom seen, two species of flying squirrels inhabit the Adirondack Park. Both play an important role in our ecosystem, but the occurrence of one species can be a great detriment to the survival of the other. Attendees can learn about these beauti-



**On this page:** Rick Bunting photographed these three scenes from a Great Blue Heron rookery. **Below:** Charlotte Demers will talk about flying squirrels in May. Don Polunci spotted the flying squirrel below in Queensbury this fall.

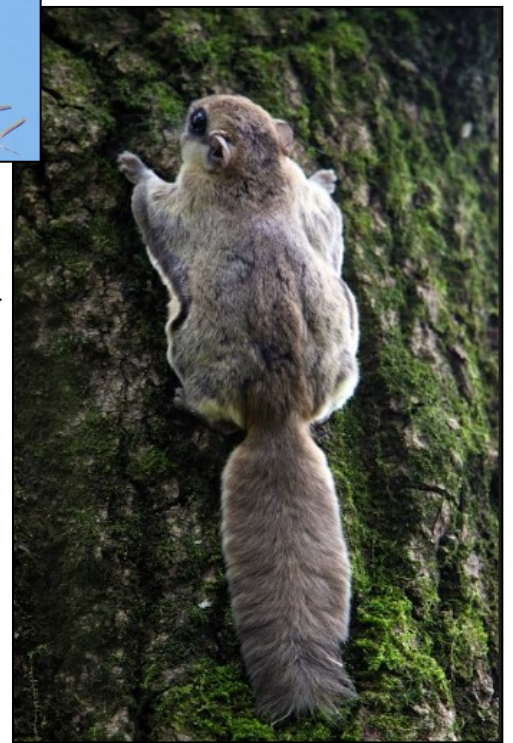


ful nocturnal animals and ongoing research at the ESF Newcomb Campus that helps scientist understand how climate change may be impacting the health of their populations.

Demers is responsible for collecting and maintaining databases associated with the long-term research. Her primary research interest revolves around small mammals and their importance in forested ecosystems. She manages the Adirondack Interpretive Center, the outreach facility of ESF’s Newcomb Campus <http://www.esf.edu/newcomb/> or on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ESFNewcombCampus/>.

Naturalist educator Charlotte Demers will present “**Night Moves: Natural History of Adirondack Flying Squirrels**” on **Wednesday, May 29**, at **Crandall Library** in downtown Glens Falls at 7:00 p.m.

Demers has worked as a biologist at the Newcomb Campus of the College



Please avoid wearing fragranced products, to avoid triggering allergies, asthma and migraines in those attending the programs.

Production of this issue of *The Fledgling* newsletter is provided by Edward Jones, 34 Congress Street, Suite 102, Saratoga Springs, N.Y.



# Christmas Bird Count report

By Linda White, Christmas Bird Count Compiler

Southern Adirondack Audubon members and volunteers participated in the 119th Annual Christmas Bird Count on December 15, 2018. Our 15-mile-diameter count circle is designated as Hudson Falls and extends from Lake George, to Argyle, to Gansevoort, and to West Mountain.

We had some of the best weather conditions since we started in 1983, enabling more walking miles. The water was mostly frozen, which limited the number of waterfowl observed. Seven groups spent a total of 52 hours out counting each and every bird. They drove 400 miles and walked 10 miles to find 54 different species of birds. We had so much fun spending the day searching for birds.

Many thanks go out to: Beth, Brad, and Nathan Bidwell, Jackie Bogardus, Barb Putnam, Joyce Miller, Russ Hilliard, Eric Potter, Helen Crawshaw, Jacque Tinker, Terry Hall, Ann Reames, and first timers to



During the Christmas Bird Count, Barb Putnam and Jackie Bogardus were birding near the Glens Falls Country Club in Queensbury when they spotted this Barred Owl peering back at them. Photo: Barb Putnam.

Snow Goose 1, Canada Goose 4,501, American Black Duck 16, Mallard 296, Common Goldeneye 191, Hooded Merganser 11, Common Merganser 25, Wild Turkey 8, Great Blue Heron 4, **Black Vulture 1**, Sharp-shinned Hawk 1, Cooper's Hawk 2, Bald Eagle 4, Red-tailed Hawk 38, Rough-legged Hawk 2, Ring-billed Gull 54, Herring Gull 9, Rock Pigeon 480, Mourning Dove 108, Barred Owl 2, Belted Kingfisher 1, Red-bellied Woodpecker 30, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 3, Downy Woodpecker 38, Hairy Woodpecker 18, Pileated Woodpecker 7, American Kestrel 2, **Merlin 1**, **Peregrine Falcon 1**, Blue Jay 104, American Crow 2,743, Common Raven 5, Red-breasted Nuthatch 5, White-breasted Nuthatch 57, Brown Creeper 2, Carolina Wren 9, **Golden-crowned Kinglet 3**, Eastern Bluebird 42, American Robin 127, Northern Mockingbird 9, European Starling 1,212, Cedar Waxwing 1 (during count week), American Tree Sparrow 23, Dark-eyed Junco 168, White-throated Sparrow 14, Song Sparrow 7, Northern Cardinal 56, Common Grackle 5, House Finch 12, Common Redpoll 40, American Goldfinch 93, **Evening Grosbeak 2**, House Sparrow 71.

this count; Dana Stimpson, Tom and Nancy Federlin, and John Loz. The count data will be available online after the data has been verified, usually by the end of February.

Here is a list of the birds seen, with unusual observations in bold:

A total of **10,954** individual birds were seen. Awesome results from some amazing birders!

## About Wildflowers

### Trailing Arbutus

By Diane Collins

Trailing Arbutus, also called Mayflower Trailing Arbutus, is native throughout eastern North America. Historians believe that the mayflower plant is an ancient plant that existed since the last glacier period. Folklore has the Pilgrims calling it "mayflower" in honor of their ship to America.

The scientific name, *Epigaea repens*, was coined by Linnaeus in 1753 from Greek and Latin meaning "creeping (or running) on earth." This trailing vine species blooms in small patches in early spring throughout Cole's Woods, but only briefly. Once you find it, bend low to the mayflower "belly" plant to catch the aroma of the small flower's exquisitely sweet spicy scent, as you may not see it on your next walk.



Bumblebees relish the flower nectar, and ants industriously disperse the seeds. The leaves are oval and leathery, and the plant can look weatherworn in the spring before the new leaves have emerged. Once abundant on forest floors, and a poet's delight, it is intolerant of habitat disturbance and much less commonly found. We're lucky to find it close by in Cole's Woods.

Wildflower photographer Diane Collins is the author of "Trailside Wildflowers in Cole's Woods," available through <http://www.wildflowersinyourownbackyard.com>. Diane sells her booklet at SAAS monthly meetings for \$10: \$5 goes to The Friends of Cole's Woods, and \$5 is donated to our Audubon chapter. Cole's Woods is located in both the City of Glens Falls and the Town of Queensbury, next to Crandall Park.

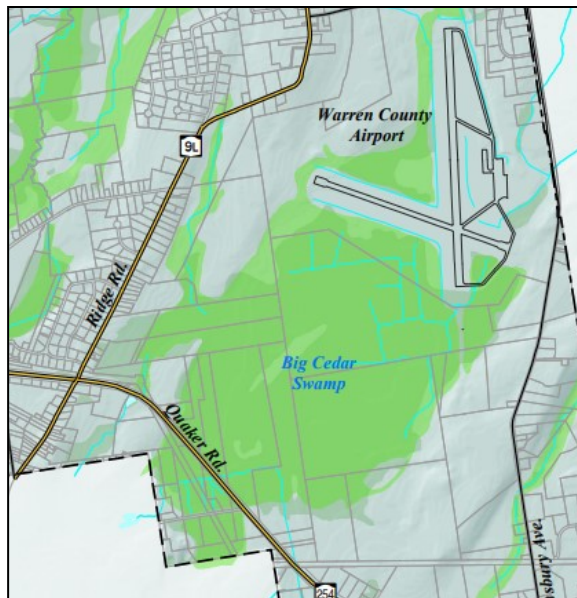
## Big Cedar Swamp Update

By John Caffry, SAAS Attorney

The efforts by the Big Cedar Swamp Coalition (Adirondack Mountain Club and Southern Adirondack Audubon), local taxpayer activists, and Glens Falls Third Ward Supervisor Claudia Braymer, to protect the globally rare marl fen in the Big Cedar Swamp from Warren County's proposal to extend an airport runway may be having an effect.

The county is now reviewing an alternate plan that would not require any additional excavation or fill in the wetland.

Under this proposal by new airport manager Don DeGraw, runway construction would potentially be limited to areas that have already been cleared and filled, and none of the marl fen would be destroyed. The clearing of 23 acres of trees in wooded wetlands would be eliminated, and only 1.2 acres of wetlands would



Big Cedar Swamp is shown on this map in bright green, indicating a NYSDEC Mapped Wetland. GIS map available at <https://www.queensbury.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/hydrography.pdf>.

ied, the Board of Supervisors has voted to go ahead with the environmental review of the original massively destructive proposal. This will include a hydrological study of the area around the runway, including the marl fen.

I will continue to monitor this action on behalf of the Coalition, and to encourage the county to avoid impacts to the Big Cedar Swamp.

be affected overall. The alternative would have the added benefit of costing millions of dollars less than the original runway plan.

However, as with many things, the devil is in the details, and the alternative is still in the very earliest stages of study. Even as it is being stud-

John W. Caffry is an Attorney at Law at Caffry & Flower in Glens Falls. He is the attorney for the Southern Adirondack Audubon Society. For more information, see: [https://poststar.com/news/local/airport-marl-fens-specialness-recognized-by-board/article\\_5482c54a-404c-508f-9f42-899f551da25e.html](https://poststar.com/news/local/airport-marl-fens-specialness-recognized-by-board/article_5482c54a-404c-508f-9f42-899f551da25e.html).

### Species Spotlight

## American Woodcock

By Joyce Miller, Newsletter Editor

American Woodcocks (*Scolopax minor*) look like they're assembled from leftover parts, with an avocado-shaped body, a short neck, stubby legs, round eyes set very high on its head, a mottled pattern of brown feathers and a long thin bill. It uses that 2-1/2" bill to probe the ground for earthworms and insect larvae. The cryptic coloration is very effective protection from predators, as the photo to the right shows.

This chunky, robin-sized bird winters in southeastern United States and breeds in eastern North America. Most arrive in our area in March. See the eBird records for local sightings at <https://ebird.org/map/amewoo>.

It's worth finding a wet grassy field or forest edge at dusk in



the spring to listen and watch for these birds' courtship rituals. The male gives a nasal *peent* call and then launches high up into the air, plunging to the ground in a spiral flight, chirping as its wingtips whistle. The female sits on the ground, assessing his "sky dance." Their courtship performances can persist into May.

A woodcock has a comical habit of tapping its front foot and rocking back and forth as it walks. The vibrations it creates may help the bird detect worms in the soil. The high-set eyes help it look for predators.

A member of the sandpiper family, American Woodcocks are also known as timberdoodles. See Cornell's All

About Birds <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/AmericanWoodcock/id> to learn more.

This Wikimedia Commons photo of a well-camouflaged American Woodcock was taken in Parc-nature de la Pointe-Aux-Prairies, Montreal, Canada, by guizmo\_68 - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/7958548@N03/472551926/>, CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=6729788>.

## First Saturday walks continue

SAAS continues the new “First Saturday” monthly bird walks along the Spring Run Trail in Saratoga Springs, on March 2, April 6 and May 4.

The walks are led by Ray Perry, past Director of Five Rivers Environmental Education Center.



**Above:** Birders walk along the Spring Run Trail in Saratoga Springs on one of the First Saturday birding walks sponsored by SAAS. **Below:** Cornell’s image below illustrates the human-created dangers that birds can face.

This series follows in the footsteps of some of the more noted 19th century naturalists and ornithologists who would regularly walk the areas around their homes, recording what birds, animals and plants are seen and how habitat changes over the seasons. Seeing the same area over time and the change of seasons can be quite instructive. The Spring Run Trail offers a variety of habitats. The path is paved or on a boardwalk.

All skill levels are welcomed. The bird walks start at 8:00

a.m. sharp, so please arrive a little early. Meet at the Spring Run Trail parking area, located on East Ave. near the corner of Excelsior Avenue. If the lot is full, park just slightly down the road on Excelsior Ave. in the EBI Beverage Center parking lot, adjacent to the Spring Run Trail.

Check the SAAS website to confirm the details.

## Cornell studying night sky

New technologies in data-intensive science have yielded breakthroughs in the understanding of a little-known bird habitat: the night sky.

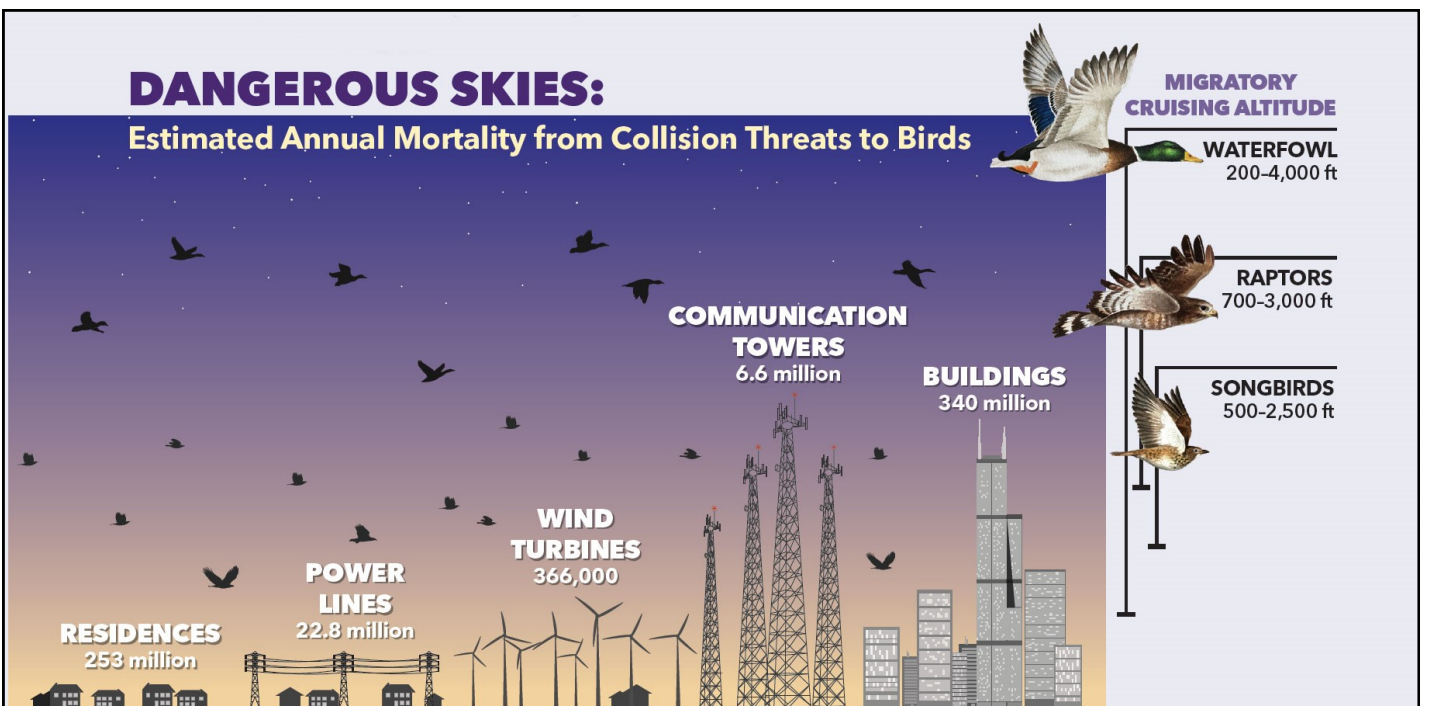
“It probably bucks what most people think of as a habitat,” says Kyle Horton, a postdoctoral researcher at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. “It’s not land and it’s not water, but it’s still something that birds make use of.”

Kyle and collaborators recently published a study in the scientific journal *Biology Letters*, shining a new light on this mysterious sky habitat and the threats that birds face while aloft.

Most migrating birds fly below 1,640 feet, which is where most of the human-made hazards are. Power lines, wind turbines, communication towers, and buildings contribute to nearly one billion deaths of birds caused by collisions with these structures annually.

The new BirdCast website (<http://birdcast.info>) shares live migration maps and three-day forecasts using more than 20 years of radar data to predict where and when millions of birds are passing overhead during spring and fall migrations.

Industries in cities like Pittsburgh, Houston and New York are now using this dynamic information to decide when to turn lights off in tall buildings, keeping birds safe on their long journeys.



## Visit Arizona in September with SAAS!

SAAS is sponsoring a birding trip to Tucson, Arizona, from September 7 to 13. The trip will visit the American Museum of Natural History's Southwestern Research Station (SWRS) in the Chiricahua Mountains of southeastern Arizona. The area is famous for its close proximity to nesting Elegant Trogons, a large diversity of hummingbirds and other spectacular bird migrants from Central and South America. The tour will focus on birds as well as the abundant flora and fauna from the summer monsoon rains. Many plants and insects can only be seen during this time of year in the desert.

The SWRS is located at 5,400 feet elevation in one of the world's most biodiverse hot spots. It is a year-round field station under the direction of the Science Department at the American Museum of Natural History in Manhattan. The cost is \$1,500 per person, double occupancy. A \$100 deposit is requested. For more information, contact SAAS board member Rob Snell at [birdbrane1@gmail.com](mailto:birdbrane1@gmail.com). Details are on the attached flyer and the SAAS website.



## Banded Peregrine in Washington County

*These photos were taken on January 29 by Dr. Gordon Ellmers in the Washington County Grasslands. This Peregrine has bands on its legs, offering information about the bird's origins.*

*Tom French of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife tells us that the bird is a female that was hatched in 2017 from an aerie on the New Balance Clock Tower at Ayer Mill in Lawrence, Mass., about 25 miles north of Boston. She was banded on June 1, 2017, and had one female and two male siblings.*

*French suggests that since she is almost two years old, she may be close to her nesting site so she may nest in the southern Adirondacks this year.*

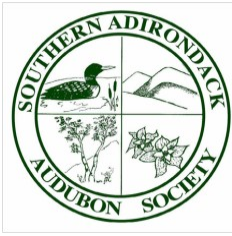
*Thanks to Scott Crocoll of NYS DEC for tracking down this information for us.*



## Welcome, new members!

Currently, 563 members of National Audubon live in our chapter area.

Many of our 120 chapter supporters belong to National Audubon Society and also financially support our local efforts of conservation and education. Chapter memberships start with the calendar year.



Our newest chapter supporters are:

*Patricia Brennan, Saratoga Springs  
Annemarie Carberry, Queensbury  
Daniel Casserly, Troy  
Charles Charlap, Cossayuna  
Lisa Cohen, Saratoga Springs  
Alison Crocker, Saratoga Springs  
Harry Czosnykowski, Clifton Park  
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Louis P. Ferrari, Schuylerville  
Edward Kopf, Lake George  
Stewart Linke, Queensbury  
Steve Miller, Queensbury  
Marjorie Rosen, Queensbury  
Richard Shafran, Schenectady  
Ellen Skinner, Queensbury  
Richard Spitzer, Glens Falls  
Jennifer Watson, Saratoga Springs  
Bert Weber, Glens Falls  
Mallory Zakeosian, Troy*

Renewal notices were sent out in December for 2019. We are grateful for all who renewed their chapter supporter membership. If you have not yet sent in your chapter supporter renewal, it is never too late; see the SAAS website's Membership page.

Thanks also to these members and several anonymous donors, who included an additional donation for our chapter operating expenses:

*David and Margaret Amodeo  
Ramona Bearor  
Ronald & Sally Briggs  
John Caffry  
Gerald Carruthers  
Helen & Bill Crawshaw  
Charlotte Demers  
Charles Farrar  
Patricia Fitzgerald  
Nancy Forgette  
Alan & Elizabeth Gee  
Christine Germain  
Mariam Hayes  
Pamela Howard  
Edward & Margot Hyde*

## Spring Field Trips and Events

- **Saturdays, March 2, April 6, May 4, 8:00 a.m.**  
**First Saturday Bird Walk, Spring Run Trail, Saratoga Springs.**  
See page 6 for details.
- **Saturday, April 13, 8:00 a.m.**  
**West Rutland Marsh IBA, Marble Street, West Rutland, VT.**  
SAAS joins our neighbors, the [Rutland County Audubon Society](#), for their monthly bird monitoring walk. Join us for the 3.7 mile loop around the marsh or go halfway. After the walk, we'll gather together at [Mary's Café](#), near the marsh, for brunch! Meet at the [Log Jam Restaurant](#) at Exit 20 off the Northway to carpool to the marsh. **Please arrive early! We'll depart at 7:00 a.m. sharp!** To register, contact John at 518-708-7825.
- **Thursday, April 18, 6:30 p.m.**  
**Betar Byway Walking Path, South Glens Falls.**  
SAAS will host an evening Spring Migration Bird Walk. Attendees will walk on a paved path through a beautiful natural setting along the Hudson River, searching for early migrants. All levels of fitness and birding skills welcome. Please dress for the weather. Walking path starts at the South Glens Falls Historical Park, 30 First St., South Glens Falls. Meet at the gazebo. The rain date is the same time and a week later on April 25th. It is in partnership with CDPHP, and open to the public.
- **Saturday, April 20**  
**Earth Day events, City Park, downtown Glens Falls.**  
Sponsored by City of Glens Falls and Town of Queensbury. Displays and activities by local environmental groups. Check local media for details closer to the date.
- **Saturday, April 27, 8:00 a.m.**  
**Bog Meadow Brook Nature Trail, Saratoga Springs**  
Join Rich Speidel in search of spring birds and waterfowl on the Bog Meadow trail, which includes an extensive boardwalk system through wetland communities: open marsh, wet meadow and forested wetland. For details about the trail, see [SAAS Birding website](#). Group size is limited, so call Rich to register: 518-623-2587. Rain date: Sunday, April 28.



*Elaine Kee  
Margaret & Alan Koechlein  
Barbara Kolapakka  
Matthew & Dorothy Kritz  
Ruth & Sandy Lamb  
Suzanne Laplante  
Licia and Steve Mackey  
Nancy Martinez  
Bernice Mennis  
Peter Miles  
Joyce Miller  
Helen Mohr  
Don & Nan Polunci  
Jeanne Polunci  
Rosemary Pusateri  
Barbara Putnam*

*Kathleen Roberts  
Beth Saunders  
John and Eileen Schneider  
Gene & Jane Sevi  
Ellen Skinner  
Beth Smisloff  
Joan & Robert Stevens  
John Strough  
Holly Vegas  
Martin Wasserman*

Chapter supporter dues are the main support for our chapter activities. Gift memberships are available, and will be announced with an appropriate card at your request.