



# The Fledgling

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

Vol. 40 No. 1, **September – December 2022**

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SouthernAdirondackAudubonSociety/>

Website: <https://www.southernadirondackaudubon.org>

## Monthly programs resume this fall

SAAS will offer a mix of in-person and Zoom monthly programs this fall. Please confirm *the location and time* on the SAAS website, Facebook and Instagram pages closer to the programs.

No programs are scheduled in September, but two programs are scheduled in October.

On **Wednesday, Oct. 19**, Warren Greene will present “**New Bird and Nature Images from the Adirondacks and Beyond**” at the Rockwell Falls Library in Lake Luzerne. The program will start at 6:30 p.m. sharp. The library closes at 8:00 p.m.

Greene’s program will feature his newest work with digital photography over the last year. Greene will share stories about close encounters with wildlife, while capturing behaviors in his photos. He will take questions from the audience at the end of his presentation.

Warren Greene is a native of Glov-

ersville. He retired after 34 years at the Fulton County Probation Department and worked part time with The Family Counseling Center. For the last eight years, he has been a Fulton County Supervisor representing his ward in Gloversville.

His lifelong love of nature evolved into his passion for nature photography that began in 1976. As a boy, he was most interested in butterflies and moths, and later in reptiles and amphibians. His attraction to birds only developed after he bought his first camera and tried to reproduce the types of bird images that he saw in books and magazines.

Greene has been published many times through the years in books, magazines, and calendars. He was



*Dr. Benjamin Van Doren will visit the Saratoga Springs Public Library on Oct. 26 to discuss his research on migratory birds.*

recognized for his work by the Cape May Bird Observatory in New Jersey.

The Rockwell Falls Public Library is located at 19 Main Street in Lake Luzerne. Call (518) 696-3423 with any questions.

On **Wednesday, Oct. 26**, Dr. Benjamin Van Doren will present “**Migration from a Bird’s Eye View**” at the Saratoga Springs Public Library. The talk will be held in the Dutcher Community Room at 7:00 p.m.

Van Doren will discuss recent advances in the science of monitoring and forecasting bird migration, and how the BirdCast project at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology is bringing migration to the masses in an era of big data. He will also discuss how light pollution impacts migratory birds, presenting recent insights into the causes of urban bird collisions

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### Fall programs:

Please confirm these program closer to the event on the SAAS website, Facebook and Instagram pages.

- **Wednesday, Oct. 19**, 6:30 p.m., at Rockwell Falls Library, Lake Luzerne. “New Bird and Nature Images from the Adirondacks and Beyond” by Warren Greene of Gloversville.
- **Wednesday, Oct. 26**, 7 p.m. at Saratoga Springs Public Library. “Migration from a Bird’s Eye View” by Dr. Benjamin Van Doren of Cornell Lab of Ornithology.
- **Wed., Nov. 30**, 7 p.m. on Zoom. “How urbanization affects the Northern Cardinal” by Prof. Daniel T. Baldassarre of SUNY Oswego. Pre-register for Zoom link at Crandall Library or see <https://www.southernadirondackaudubon.org/programs/> closer to the event.

**Betar Byway and booklet, Page 4-5**

**Wild Turkey, Page 6**

**Autumn bird quiz, Page 8**

## Southern Adirondack Audubon Society

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**Instagram:** #adkbirds

### Board and Committees

#### Officers

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([president@southernadironackaudubon.org](mailto:president@southernadironackaudubon.org))  
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#### Board of Directors

2020-2022	Dusty Caldwell Mark Silo Deb Ferguson
2021-2023	Kim Atkins Peyton Atkins John Loz
2022-2024	Judy Staubo Laurie Murphy OPEN

Board meetings are held monthly except July, August and December. Members are invited to attend.

#### Committees

Conservation: OPEN  
Education: OPEN  
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Newsletter: Joyce Miller ([editor@southernadironackaudubon.org](mailto:editor@southernadironackaudubon.org))  
Programs: John Loz (Interim chair)  
([programs@southernadironackaudubon.org](mailto:programs@southernadironackaudubon.org))  
Publicity: OPEN

Chapter memberships are \$15. Renew at <https://southernadironackaudubon.org/membership/>, or send a check using the form on the Southern Adirondack Audubon Society (SAAS) website. Contributions support SAAS's education and conservation activities in our region.

SAAS is a certified local chapter of the National Audubon Society. SAAS has approximately 600 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

### "Lights Out!"

By Rob Snell, SAAS President

In a single night in April, more than two million birds migrated over Saratoga County.

Predictions, and data like these, are made possible by adapting weather radar to track bird migration, and are available to the public at BirdCast: <https://birdcast.info/>.

Disturbingly, researchers learn about these migration pulses in cities by counting birds that succumb to window collisions at the base of skyscrapers. Migrating birds get confused and disoriented by city lights, which lead to fatal collisions, and are documented on their sidewalks. These gut wrenching observations taught us that millions of birds are dying each year due to light pollution.

Fortunately, awareness is beginning to take hold. Recently, New York State directed their agencies to turn

off all non-essential outdoor lighting, and encouraged the same for indoor lights during migration.

It's a step forward, but not just commercial buildings pollute. We all can help reduce light pollution.

Small things like turning off decorative lighting and installing light motion sensors can make a difference. Please visit this Audubon website to learn about more ways you can help the "Lights Out" campaign, <https://www.audubon.org/lights-out-program>. As a chapter, we will be joining Audubon N.Y. and National Audubon to help reduce this disturbing source of bird fatalities.

Look for upcoming communications from SAAS that will help keep you informed and provide ways for you to participate in this important movement. Thank you for your support.



Rob Snell

## Meet our Volunteers

### Diane Collins

Diane Collins is our newsletter's wildflower columnist.

Collins relocated from Phoenix to Glens Falls in 1996, where she worked at Glens Falls Hospital as an RN case manager.

After moving into a small home near the Feeder Canal in 2001, she used *Newcomb's Wildflower Guide* to identify wildflowers seen during her walks along the canal pathway with her husky, Kelsey. She photographed them as well.

This led to partnering with the Feeder Canal Alliance to produce her first booklet, *Wildflowers Along the Feeder Canal Park Trail* in 2002, and the formation of her home business "Wildflowers In Your Own Backyard."

Identifying and photographing trailside wildflowers has become a passion that stayed with her. She is

inspired by the naturalist John Burroughs, who said "To find new things, take the path you took yesterday." Chronicling wildflowers along the same pathway through spring and summer characterizes her approach.

She partnered with Warrensburgh Beautification and the Friends of Cole's Woods to produce two more

booklets. She recently collaborated with SAAS on a successful application for a Touba Family Foundation grant to publish a new booklet, *Springtime Birds and Wildflowers Along the Betar Byway*, to be completed this fall. Renowned local wild-

life photographer and retired veterinarian Gordon Ellmers has provided photos of local bird species.

Collins enjoys writing the column "About Wildflowers" for the quarterly Southern Adirondack Audubon Society newsletters and looks forward to bird and wildflower walks next spring.





Above: Warren Greene took this photo of a female Northern Flicker and two hungry nestlings. He will present an in-person program on Oct. 19 in Lake Luzerne, featuring birds of the Adirondacks and other regions.

## Monthly programs

Continued from page 1

and how “lights-out” programs can make a difference.

Van Doren earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Cornell University and a PhD in Zoology from Oxford University. He has received achievement awards from the Linnean Society of London, Zoological Society of London, and the American Ornithological Society.

As a Presidential Postdoctoral Fellow at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, he explores how climate change, light pollution, and human-dominated landscapes influence migratory bird ecology and behavior. Van Doren studies the eco-evolutionary responses of migratory birds to environmental change. His research spans spatial and population scales and straddles ecology, evolution, behavior, and conservation. He takes diverse perspectives—from individuals to flyways, tracking to remote sensing, acoustics to genomics. His recent work has focused on three

major themes: (1) birds’ innate migratory programs, (2) the impact of human activity on migration, and (3) continent-scale perspectives on migration systems. For more about his research, see his website, [Benjamin Van Doren \(bvandoren.com\)](http://bvandoren.com).

On **Wednesday, Nov. 30**, SUNY Oswego professor Daniel T. Baldassarre will talk about “**How urbanization affects the Northern Cardinal**” in a Zoom program at 7:00 p.m.

Register in advance for the Zoom link through Crandall Public Library (Go to November on this calendar link: <https://crandall.evanced.info/signup/calendar?ongoing=0>).

“Humans dominate the landscape, so we must understand how our activity affects wildlife if we aim to sustainably coexist,” said Baldassarre. “Many birds appear to thrive in cities, but we know little about how

urbanization affects their behavior and communication.”

In this talk, he will describe the research that he and SUNY Oswego undergraduates conducted on the effects of urbanization on the Northern Cardinal. “We focus mainly on neophobia (fear of new things) and visual communication (color), and compare these attributes between rural birds in Oswego, N.Y. and urban birds in Syracuse, N.Y.”

Baldassarre is an Assistant Professor and Provost Teaching Fellow in the Department of Biological Sciences at SUNY Oswego. At SUNY Oswego, he studies the behavioral ecology of Northern Cardinals and how they are affected by urbanization. Cardinals are excellent urban adapters, he said, making use of bird feeders and habitat modification by humans.

In 2014, he received his PhD from Cornell University, where he studied how sexual selection influences speciation dynamics in the Red-backed Fairy-wren. He was awarded a National Science Foundation Postdoctoral Research Fellowship to study the evolution of blood feeding in the Vampire Finch of the Galápagos, while based at the University of Miami. He also served as a Postdoctoral Research Associate at Princeton University studying phenotypic plasticity in desert and woodland breeding populations of the Phainopepla in southern California.



Above: SUNY Oswego biology professor Daniel T. Baldassarre holds a Northern Cardinal. He will offer a Zoom talk on “How urbanization affects the Northern Cardinal” on Wednesday, Nov. 30. Pre-register at Crandall Public Library’s website.

Right: Dr. Baldassarre uses calipers to measure the bill of a male Northern Cardinal.



**Edward Jones**  
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

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

## ***Featured Birding Trails:***

# **Betar Byway in South Glens Falls**

*We're featuring birding and nature trails that cater to the mobility-impaired in our Southern Adirondack Mountains and Foot-hills region. SAAS member Mona Bearor's article about the Betar Byway on the SAAS Birding page is the basis of this article.*

The Betar Byway is a paved path that follows the shoreline of the Hudson River in the Village of South Glens Falls for approximately a mile.

Birding the entire trail system will take you through mixed woods, riverfront, a small wetland area and the beach itself. This is an urban birding hotspot with 155 species seen since record keeping started. The last daily record of species seen was 44 in one day in April, 2018.

The paved Betar Byway meanders along the river and is flanked by pockets of predominately deciduous trees with tangled undergrowth, providing good habitat for ground and low elevation nest-ers.

The trail offers grassy areas, open forest, shrubby field, riparian river habitats and a public sandy beach. Baltimore Orioles return annually to nest in the cottonwood trees along the Hudson River. Carolina



## **New booklet: Betar wildflower and birds**

SAAS newsletter columnist and wildflower photographer Diane Collins has written a new booklet, *Springtime Birds and Wildflowers Along the Betar Byway*. It will debut this fall and will be offered for sale at in-person programs with proceeds benefiting SAAS.

Collins worked with SAAS past president John Loz to win a grant from the Touba Family Foundation to create the booklet. Collins wrote the booklet and contributed her wildflower photos. Wildlife photographer and retired Fort Edward veterinarian Gordon Ellmers provided the booklet's bird photos.

Wrens can be heard year-round in the northern third of the trail. Two walkways lead out to overviews of the river. Many warblers, flycatchers, and waterfowl can be heard and seen during the year. In 2021 and 2022, a leucistic, mostly-white American Robin was a popular resident.

Birders can encounter a number of dog-walkers and bicyclists along this paved trail, but not enough to be a hazard. Pets must be leashed at all times.



*Top, the South Glens Falls Historical Park sign indicates historical areas of interest along the Betar Byway.*

*Left: the northern end of the trail starts with a commemorative sign on a millstone. The trail parallels the Hudson River between Glens Falls and South Glens Falls.*

*Below, the start of the trail offers a kiosk with bird information, brochures and bookmarks from SAAS.*



Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird website offers a list of species reported by area birders: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L1528567>. This page shows a monthly bar chart of bird species: <https://ebird.org/barchart?r=L1528567&yr=all&m=>

Parking lots are available at the south and north ends of the trail. See this SAAS website for details: <https://www.southernadirondackaudubon.org/betar-byway/>.

See Page 5 for photos of the wooded upper trail of the Betar Byway, which overlooks the Hudson River. This section offers a small parking lot at the end of Beach Road in South Glens Falls.

*More photos on Page 5*

*Left: In spring, Baltimore Orioles frequently nest in the cottonwood trees along the river. Their pendulous nests look like old gym socks hanging from the tips of branches.*

## Renew your SAAS membership for a chance at this photo!

Join SAAS as a chapter supporter or renew your support for \$15 before **October 1**, and receive three entries to win this 2018 Audubon Photo Award winning Great Gray Owl photograph by Steve Mattheis. This photo won an Audubon Photography Award and was on national tour in 2019. It is 36" x 24" mounted on foam board, and can be hung as is. An additional ticket will be allotted for every \$5 donated here or through our donation page. The drawing will be held on October 1. See the SAAS Membership page (<https://www.southernadironackaudubon.org/membership/>).



*Above: Betar Byway's upper trail offers shaded paths and views.*

## Betar Byway extension trail

*By Mona Bearor, SAAS Member*

The South Glens Falls Beach Bikeway extension is a 1.3 mile gravel road on a wooded bluff overlooking the Hudson River. It is located above Sandbar Beach, near the south end of the Betar Byway's paved trail.

This oasis of mixed oak and pine habitat can be very productive. Woodpeckers, Brown Creepers, Tufted Titmouse, and Black-capped Chickadees are prevalent. Both Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks have been seen here. In warm weather, look for warbler species such as Tennessee, Pine, Northern Parula, and Blackburnian.

Down the hill at Sandbar Beach, check the flooded area near the beach entrance for Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, woodpeckers, ducks and warblers. Northern Flicker families are often seen on the grassy areas. The wet areas and river setbacks near the beach concession

stand building have yielded Wood Ducks, Great-crested Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, and House Wren during nesting season. Spotted Sandpiper is often seen during migration times. In early winter, Snow Buntings have been sighted on the beach.

## Choose SAAS for Amazon Smile

People who shop online through Amazon.com can choose a charity to receive a percentage of sales through the Amazon Smile website.

If you select Southern Adirondack Audubon Society, it will not cost you anything extra and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to SAAS every time you shop.

Visit the SAAS page: <https://www.southernadironackaudubon.org/amazon-smile/> for details. Please consider this way to contribute to SAAS as the holidays approach!

## About Wildflowers

### Black-eyed Susan

By Diane Collins

Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) is not a rarity, and a favorite of many.

Black-eyed Susans are one of the few wildflowers in the Composite (or Aster) Family that are native. Most of the other well-known composites, such as the ox-eye daisy (native to South Africa), coltsfoot (native to Europe), and the tenacious dandelion (originating from Asia Minor) arrived with the early settlers, either in seed packets or accidentally with clothing and goods.

This plant moved eastward from the western plains mixed with red clover seeds ordered by farmers, and happily took root in sunny lands cleared by settlers.



While the midwestern Black-eyed Susan is a North American native, its common name comes from an English ballad by John Gay, about a forlorn young woman looking for her sweetheart: “All the dawn the fleet was moor’d, The streamers waving in the wind, When black-eyed Susan came on board, Oh where shall I my true love find? Tell me, ye jovial sailors, tell me true, If my sweet William, if my sweet William Sails

among your crew?”

A composite flower looks like a large single flower but is actually composed of hundreds of smaller flowers. The disc center is a cluster of hundreds of tiny flowers surrounded by sterile ray flowers (the petals) that act as landing pads for pollinating insects. The disc flowers are fertile and each one produces a seed. The composites, designed to make lots of seeds and attract insects, are considered the most recent flower on the evolutionary scale, and are built for success. Successful they are!

Wildflower photographer Diane Collins is the author of *Trailside Wildflowers in Cole's Woods*; see <http://www.wildflowersinyourownbackyard.com>. Collins sells her booklet for \$10. Proceeds go to *The Friends of Cole's Woods* and our Audubon chapter. *Cole's Woods* is located in both the City of Glens Falls and the Town of Queensbury, next to Crandall Park. She is working on a new guide to flowers and birds of the Betar Byway in South Glens Falls.

## Species Spotlight

### Wild Turkey

By Joyce Miller, SAAS Newsletter Editor

Many people only think of turkeys on a certain autumn holiday. The domestic bird's wild cousin, the Wild Turkey, is available to enjoy all year round.

Wild Turkeys are often seen strutting through fields and in woods searching for oak and hickory nuts, insects, snails, seeds and fruit, and will also visit bird feeders. They do not migrate.

Wild Turkeys are native to North America. Their fossils, thought to be more than five million years old, have been discovered in southern North America, according to Cornell's All About Birds.

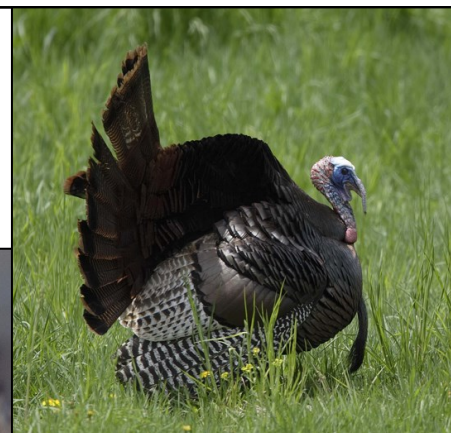
In New York State, they disappeared by the mid-1840s from habitat loss and hunting. They were reintroduced starting in 1959. The N.Y.S. Department of Environmental Conservation estimates there are 180,000 turkeys in the state, according to their annual *Summer Wild Turkey Sighting Survey*. In North America, the Wild

Turkey population is now estimated to be almost seven million.

Males have bare heads with white and blue skin and red throat wattles. They are covered with iridescent feathers, weigh up to 25 pounds, and sport a tuft of long feathers on their chests called a “beard.”

Males (toms) have spurs on their legs; females (hens) don't. Females weigh about half as much as males, according to the NYSDEC *Wild Turkey* page (<https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7062.html>). Perhaps 10% of females have beards. The young, called poults, can fly when two or three weeks old. Turkeys roost in trees at night for safety.

When faced with danger, females usually fly and males usually run from the threat, reports *All About Birds*. Wild Turkeys can trot up to 25 miles per hour and fly as fast as 55



Dr. Gordon Ellmers took these photos of a male (above) and a female (left) Wild Turkey.

miles an hour. In spring, males attract females by making a gobbling call and displaying their feathers. A male mates with several females. The females lay 10 to 12 eggs on the ground. In the winter, males and females gather in their own large separate flocks.

For more about these personable birds, see Cornell's *All About Birds* site: [https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Wild\\_Turkey/overview](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Wild_Turkey/overview).



## Birding in Iceland

By Joyce Miller, Newsletter Editor

I joined eight other birders in June on a trip to Iceland. Our group was led by Megan Crewe of Field Guides Birding Tours. We tallied 68 bird species and enjoyed the dramatic volcanic landscapes. Our group also spotted an Arctic Fox, hunting Orcas, and Gray and Harbor Seals.

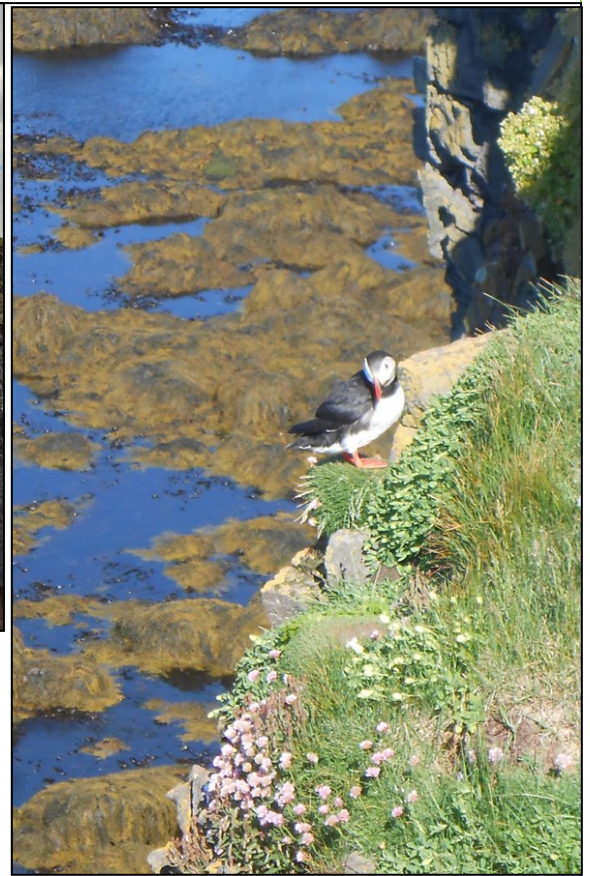
We started in the clean capital city of Reykjavik in the southwest, flew north to Lake Myvatn near the Arctic Circle, then drove in a comfortable mini-bus to the West Fjords. After



Left: Arctic Poppies push through the gravel.

Below: Glaciers carved both sides of this volcanic mountain to create the knife-edge ridges.

Right: Mud pots and steam vents remain where the North American and Eurasian Tectonic Plates meet in Iceland.

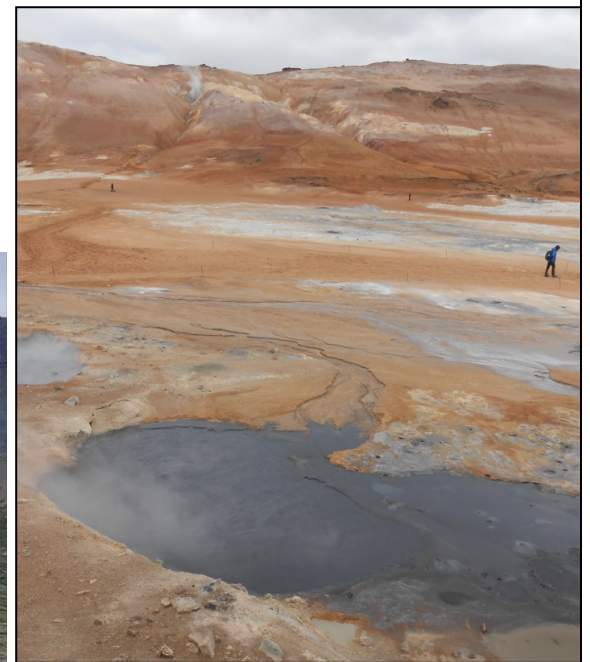


Above: Volcanic basalt rocks form a graceful arch on the Snaefellsnes Peninsula.

Right: An Atlantic Puffin rests near its burrow in the sod on the Latrabjarg seabird cliffs.

exploring the Arctic Ocean fjords, we moved on to the famous Latrabjarg seabird cliffs, where Atlantic Puffins, Northern Fulmars, murre, and other birds nested on cliff ledges, patrolled by predatory Giant Skuas. Hundreds of puffins flew or swam past us as we took a ferry to the Snaefellsnes Peninsula, which is dominated by a snow-capped stratovolcano. Weather was consistently breezy, with refreshing temperatures mostly in the 50s F.

We encountered no biting insects—what a treat! Iceland is too cold for reptiles. Daylight lasted well into the night. Iceland is an expensive place to visit because many things need to be imported. We calculated gas prices to be about \$10 a gallon. Typical meals often included arctic char or roasted lamb, potatoes and rich skyr yogurt. It is a five-hour flight from Newark International Airport.





## Fall bird quiz!

These autumn bird photos were taken by Queensbury wildlife photographer and past SAAS president Don Polunci. You're likely to see these birds at your feeder, in your yard or along a trail in crisp fall weather.

Can you match the names and photos?

- *Dark-eyed Junco*
- *American Goldfinch*
- *Mourning Dove*
- *Brown Creeper*
- *Black-capped Chickadee*
- *House Finch*
- *Common Redpoll*
- *Downy Woodpecker*

Check your answers at Cornell's All About Birds website (<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/>). To identify birds in the field, Cornell offers the Merlin app.

Learn more about common feeder birds at Project FeederWatch: *Food and Feeder Preferences of Common Feeder Birds* (<https://feederwatch.org/learn/common-feeder-birds/>). Sort the bird options at this site by limiting it to the Northeast and the type of feeder food you offer.

