



The Fledgling

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

Vol. 41 No. 4, **June — August 2024**

Now in our 41st Year!

Facebook: www.facebook.com/SouthernAdirondackAudubonSociety

Website: www.southernadirondackaudubon.org

This summer: Loons, turtles, SPAC concert, raptor rehab

Dr. Nina Schoch will present “**Unveiling the Secret Lives of Nesting Adirondack Loons**” on **Thursday, June 20** at 7:00 p.m. at Lake Pleasant Public Library in Speculator.

The presentation provides information about loon behavior and natural history, an overview of the work of the Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation (ACLC) and discussion of their nest camera study.

The ACLC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to inspiring passion for and promoting the conservation of Adirondack loons, a sentinel of the environment. The center encompasses scientific research, educational outreach, and conservation and management to help protect and support healthy populations of Common Loons in New York State and throughout North America.

Dr. Nina Schoch is the Executive Director of the ACLC, and has studied loons in New York’s Adirondack Park since 1998. A wildlife veterinarian and rehabilitator, she also has a master’s degree in Natural Resources/Wildlife Management. She practiced small animal medicine in New York’s Adirondack Park from 1991-2002, is a member of several conservation and wildlife health related organizations, and has written many scientific and lay articles about the results of Adirondack loon research.

She received the 2018 Adirondack Research Consortium’s Elizabeth



An adult Common Loon provides a comfortable ride to its chick, in this photo by Gordon Ellmers. Dr. Nina Schoch offers a program in Speculator on Adirondack loons on June 20.

Thorndike Adirondack Achievement Award, the 2011 NYS Outdoor Writers Association M. Paul Keesler N.Y. Outdoor Citizen Award, and was inducted into the NYS Outdoorsmen Hall of Fame in 2014.

On **Wednesday, July 24** at 7:00 p.m. at the Lake Pleasant Public Library in Speculator, Debbie Philp will present “**Adirondack Turtles.**” The program will offer a glimpse into the lives of freshwater turtles and their unique history and anatomy.

Philp will bring “ambassador turtles” from the Adirondacks and beyond. She’ll discuss why turtles are disappearing and how to ensure turtles are around for generations to come.

Philp is a N.Y.S. licensed wildlife rehabilitator and the founder of Dancing Turtle Rescue, a small nonprofit dedicated to saving native freshwater turtles and their wetland habitats.

Philp is a certified master herpetologist and brings a strong background in natural history to her public edu-



Jen Moran holds Hector, an eastern box turtle and New York native. Dancing Turtle Rescue will present a program on July 24 in Speculator. Photo: John Loz

cation programs. She shares her home with rescued pets including 15 turtles, a lizard, a snake, and two frogs, in addition to her licensed educational ambassadors and any injured native turtles in care.

Philp is a member of North Country Wild Care, a network of wildlife rehabilitators in northeastern New York, and is currently serving as president.

Window collision program, Page 4

2025 Panama trip, Page 6

SAAS event photos, Page 10

**Southern Adirondack
Audubon Society**
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Board and Committees

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president@southernadirondackaudubon.org

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Secretary: Deb Ferguson

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2022-2024	Judy Staubo Laurie Murphy OPEN
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2024-2026	Paul Lundberg Joyce Miller

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

Committees

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Education: OPEN

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president@southernadirondackaudubon.org
Newsletter: Joyce Miller
editor@southernadirondackaudubon.org
Programs: John Loz (Interim chair)
programs@southernadirondackaudubon.org
Publicity: OPEN

Chapter memberships are \$15.
Renew at
[southernadirondackaudubon.org/
membership/](http://southernadirondackaudubon.org/membership/)

OR send a check using the form on the Southern Adirondack Audubon Society (SAAS) website. Your contribution 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

Billion with a B

By Rob Snell, SAAS President

If you have never encountered a dead bird, or held one that was stunned from a collision with your windows, count yourself lucky. It's heart-wrenching.

In the United States alone, research estimates that as many as one billion birds die each year from window collisions. Contrary to popular belief, the majority of the collisions are into low rise buildings and residential dwellings, not skyscrapers.

We all can take a part in reducing these tragic deaths with some simple actions.

During migration, lights both inside and outside your home can be confusing to birds, and lure them into fatal encounters with windows. Make a pledge to mitigate this risk by reducing, redirecting or

eliminating unnecessary lighting during spring and fall migrations.



Rob Snell

Also, because a high percentage of collisions occur during the day, lighting is not the only culprit to bird deaths with glass. Birds don't see glass as an obstruction, and sparsely placed window stickers just look like something they can fly around.

Simple actions such as moving potted plants away from your windows, placing your feeders very close to or on your windows and, creating visible patterns on your windows that birds will recognize as a barrier, will significantly reduce the likelihood of collisions. For more information on preventing "glass crash" visit this Audubon website:

www.audubon.org/news/simple-solutions-prevent-collisions.

Leaving a legacy

By Judy Staubo, SAAS Board Member

With April 15th still not relegated to a distant past, this could be a good time to consider some future planning.

Those of us nearing or approaching the age of 72, and for those of us lucky enough to have reached that noble milestone, April 15th is payback time for having seen our IRAs grow with tax sheltered investing.

The tax designers have, in their kindness, provided one last tax benefit for our IRA accounts. It's called sharing. Gifts from

IRAs to not-for-profit organizations can be used to satisfy your Required Minimum Distribution, thus lowering your taxable income.

Making a list and checking it twice is perhaps rushing the season, but it could be a good idea to start your list of charitable donations now and avoid the year end rush when holiday obligations get in the way of good intentions. We invite your consideration.

We encourage everyone to make a difference this year. Please visit the SAAS Donation page: www.southernadirondackaudubon.org/donate.

Win this poster!

Scott Suriano's photo of a bright pink Roseate Spoonbill and Willets on Sanibel Island, Florida placed in the 2018 Audubon Photo Award Top 100.

Renew or join as a chapter supporter by June 30 to receive three tickets to win this poster-sized photo print. The drawing will be held the first week of July.

Chapter memberships are only \$15 and run for a year on a rolling basis. An additional ticket will be allotted for every \$5 donated through the SAAS membership or donation page.



Contributions support SAAS's local educational and conservation activities. Many National members also become chapter supporters to financially support SAAS's local efforts. Visit www.southernadirondackaudubon.org/membership.



SAAS members get a 50% discount on SPAC tickets on August 8, when Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducts the Philadelphia Orchestra. Photo: Landon Nordeman

Summer events

Continued from Page 1

On **Thursday August 8**, join SAAS at the **Saratoga Performing Arts Center (SPAC)** in Saratoga Springs for a Community Conservation Night concert with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

SAAS chapter supporters can save 50% off tickets to this performance by using a promo code. To receive the code, email programs@southernadironackaudubon.org.

Ticket-holders can arrive when gates open at 5:30 p.m. to enjoy the SPAC grounds and chat with SAAS volunteers and board members. The concert starts at 7:30 p.m.

SAAS will be one of several environmental groups offering exhibits at the Julie Bonacio Family Pavilion facing the SPAC amphitheater. SAAS volunteers will share information about the Native Plant Garden Certification program and other projects starting at 5:30 p.m.

The Philadelphia Orchestra's performance will celebrate the rhythms of nature. Music director Yannick Nézet-Séguin will conduct German composer Richard Strauss's powerful "An Alpine Symphony." The 1915 tone poem conjures an exhilarating trek through the Alpine mountains.

On **Saturday, August 31**, the **Caroga Arts Collective** will host two SAAS events at Caroga Lake: a live birds of prey program and an information table.

Deb Saltis of Falcon Heart Rescue will bring live birds of prey to a program at 11:00 a.m. at Sherman's Park, 114 East Shore Road West in Caroga Lake.

Deborah Saltis is the President of Falcon Heart Rescue, Inc. a non-profit wildlife rescue and educational facility in Herkimer.

She and Matt Perry are co-founders of the Utica Peregrine Falcon Project. Soon after starting the project, it became apparent that a closer rehab option was needed to deal with injured young falcons, because the nearest one was more than an hour away. Many hours of training, testing, building, learning, and licensing went into what is now a facility that rehabs many birds each year and is home to 14 educational birds as well.



Deb Saltis holds a Red-tailed Hawk. Photo courtesy of Deb Saltis

Later that afternoon, SAAS will have an information table from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Sherman's Park.

At 7:00 p.m., a free concert will feature an Eagles and AC/DC cover band. The evening will also feature food trucks and free rides on the 1920's historic carousel with views of Caroga Lake.



CarogaArts
COLLECTIVE



The N.Y.S. Breeding Bird Atlas project seeks to determine which bird species breed in the state, such as Cedar Waxwings.

Join the final months of the Breeding Bird Atlas

This summer is the final season for the New York State Breeding Bird Atlas III. It aims to determine every bird species breeding in the state.

This citizen-science research project is held every 20 years. The first atlas was done in the 1980s. This year is the last of this five-year study. Other states also do atlas projects.

New York State is divided into atlas blocks, with emphasis on certain priority blocks. A block needs 15 hours of observations by birders during the breeding season between May 15 and July 15 to be considered complete.

Visit the NYSBBAIIII site (ebird.org/atlasny/about) to learn more about the project. Click the *Final Year Block Tool* link then the *County Summary* tab to search a map for local blocks to complete.

Contact Alison Van Keuren, NYSBBAIIII Regional Coordinator for the Capital Region with questions: aev12159@gmail.com.

Greenwich photo exhibit

From early May through late June, the Greenwich Free Library in Washington County will display bird photos from the 2022 National Audubon Society Photography Awards.

The photos, by both professional and amateur photographers, feature striking images of birds from around the United States.

Hummingbird feeder tips from Audubon

“To sustain their supercharged metabolisms, hummingbirds must eat once every 10 to 15 minutes and visit between 1,000 and 2,000 flowers per day,” according to the National Audubon Society’s webpage “How to Create a Hummingbird-Friendly Yard” (www.audubon.org/community-science/hummingbirds/how-create-hummingbird-friendly-yard).

Below are some tips from this page.

If you use hummingbird feeders:

- Hang your feeders in the shade to prevent the sugar solution from fermenting.
- Change the sugar water regularly, about twice a week in warm weather.



A female Ruby-throated Hummingbird hovers near a thistle flower in this photo from Gordon Ellmers. This is the hummingbird species usually found in New York State.

- Clean the feeders with a solution of one part white vinegar to four parts water about once a week.

These plants, native to the eastern United States, are among the many that attract hummingbirds and other pollinators:

- beebalms such as Wild bergamot

(*Monarda fistulosa*), Scarlet beebalm (*Monarda didyma*) and Spotted beebalm (*Monarda punctata*)

- Coral (or Trumpet) honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*)
- Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*).

Bird-window collisions program, June 6

SAAS and Crandall Public Library will co-host the program "**Bird-Window Collisions and Bird-Safe Solutions**" on **Thursday, June 6** at 7:00 p.m.

This event is in response to the window strike deaths of 19 Cedar Waxwings near the windows at Crandall Public Library in downtown Glens Falls, as reported in The Chronicle newspaper on May 9 and 16.

Birds can't perceive glass, and typically die after colliding with windows. Collisions with windows are the third greatest cause of death for birds in the United States, after habitat loss and predation by outdoor cats. About one million birds collide with windows every day, according to peer-reviewed research.

The talk will be presented by SAAS program chair John Loz. He is also a Project Presenter for the Pennsylvania-based Bird-Window Collision Working Group that includes the Acopian Center at Muhlenberg College and Audubon Pennsylvania.

To learn about this issue and how to

help mitigate it at your home, see:

- “Reducing collisions with glass” from National Audubon Society: www.audubon.org/news/reducing-collisions-glass
- “Why Birds Hit Windows—And How You Can Help Prevent It” from All About Birds, Cornell Lab of Ornithology: www.allaboutbirds.org/news/why-birds-hit-windows-and-how-you-can-help-prevent-it/#
- “Glass Collisions: Preventing Bird Window Strikes” from American Bird Conservancy: abcbirds.org/glass-collisions/

Summer field trips

SAAS is planning several field trips this spring.

- On **Sunday June 2**, SAAS field trips chair John Loz and N.Y.S. licensed guides Michael and Wanda Moccio will lead a carpool driving safari into the **Perkins Clearing** area above Speculator, Hamilton County starting at 7:30 a.m. near Speculator. Registration is required; please email Loz at programs@southernadirondackaudubon.org.
- On **Friday, June 14**, SAAS

President Rob Snell will lead a field trip at 7:30 a.m. to the **Saratoga Battlefield** (Saratoga National Historical Park) in Stillwater, Saratoga County. For details and to register, contact Snell at birdbrane1@gmail.com.

- Watch for **pop-up walks** announced on Facebook, Instagram and the SAAS webpage.
- To receive email alerts about upcoming walks, sign up on the SAAS Contacts page: www.southernadirondackaudubon.org/subscribe/.
- First Saturday Bird Walks are on hiatus for the summer.

Before attending the walks, please review the field trip guidelines.

Field trip guidelines

- Please review the SAAS **Field Trip Guidelines** (www.southernadirondackaudubon.org/field-trip-guidelines/).
- SAAS trips follow the American Birding Association’s **Code of Birding Ethics** (www.aba.org/aba-code-of-birding-ethics/).
- Check the SAAS website and Facebook pages for updates on trips.

Adirondack Trust grant funds more birding backpacks at local libraries

A generous \$1,200 Lend-a-Hand Grant from the Adirondack Trust Company Community Fund has allowed SAAS to provide six more birding backpacks to public libraries in Saratoga, Warren, Washington and Hamilton counties.

Area residents can now borrow birding backpacks from these 16 area public libraries:

- Lake George - Caldwell Public Library - 2
- Saratoga Springs Public Library - 2 (children's area and adult's area)
- Galway - Galway Public Library
- Ballston Spa - Ballston Spa Public Library
- Warrensburg - The Richards Library

- Chestertown - Town of Chester Public Library - 2
- Speculator - Lake Pleasant Public Library
- Bolton Landing - Bolton Free Library
- Salem - Bancroft Public Library
- Argyle - Argyle Free Library
- Hudson Falls - Hudson Falls Free Library
- Greenwich - Greenwich Free Library - 2
- North Creek - Town of Johnsbury Library
- Corinth - Corinth Free Library
- Burnt Hills - Ballston Community Public Library (2) ((children's area and adult's area)
- Brant Lake - Horicon Free Public Library

If you would like to have a birding backpack added to a library near

you, please talk to your community's library director. They can contact SAAS at www.southernadirondackaudubon.org/contact/.

Each backpack contains two pairs of binoculars, a list of birdwatching locations specific to each community, the book *Birding Adventures for Kids*, a laminated *Birds of New York* guide, a journal to record observations, and a nature themed outdoor walking Bingo game.

For details about the backpacks, see

www.southernadirondackaudubon.org/education/

Avian advocates

North Country Wild Care

This is the first of a series of features highlighting the work of Southern Adirondack non-profit organizations that support wild birds. This information was provided by Maureen Tusty, NCWC Vice President.

North Country Wild Care (NCWC) is a non-profit association founded in 2001 to support the rehabilitation of orphaned and injured wildlife throughout the area.

NCWC membership includes over 45 licensed rehabilitators in nine local counties, 30 support members and hotline volunteers, and over 60 transportation volunteers.

Home-based wildlife rehabilitation is a demanding undertaking, as rehabbers collectively take in thousands of animals each year: orphaned baby birds or squirrels found after a tree is taken down, birds and baby bunnies caught by cats and dogs, orphaned fawns, or hawks, owls and eagles hit by cars or poisoned. These are just a few examples of the type of wildlife from our own communities that are assisted by rehabilitators, always with the goal to return animals to their natural environments in the wild.



This juvenile Great Horned Owl is among the many birds and other wildlife helped this year by NCWC.

NCWC serves Albany, Rensselaer, Schenectady, Saratoga, Warren, Washington, Montgomery, Fulton and Essex Counties. This nine-county area does not have a wildlife rehabilitation center, only home-based volunteers. In New York State, all rehabilitators must have a state license to take in and treat wildlife. However, the state provides no payment, reimbursement or funding. It is strictly a volunteer endeavor.

NCWC was founded as a support network to assist wildlife rehabilitators to bear the heavy personal cost of

caring for animals. This includes medications, medical supplies, safe housing, and species-specific food, as well as providing continuing education.

NCWC also provides an Emergency Hotline staffed 24/7 for the public to call regarding injured or orphaned wildlife: (518) 964-6740. Hotline staff provide valuable education to the general public through the 21,000+ calls per year they handle.

- Website: northcountrywildcare.org/
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/NorthCountryWildCare/



Edward Jones
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

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



Left: The Fiery-throated Hummingbird is native to Panama. Photo: Debbie Jordan, Holbrook Tours

Above: Birding in the lush Gamboa Rainforest. Photo: Javier Losa

Join SAAS on Panama trip in February 2025

SAAS is organizing a small-group trip to Panama from **February 1 to 8, 2025**, through Holbrook Tours.

The trip is \$3,450 excluding airfare. Limited single rooms are available for an additional \$375. The final payment due date is October 29, 2024. The trip is limited to 8 to 12 participants.

Panama boasts the highest diversity of bird species in Central America. The country's location at the convergence of two continents makes it the prime respite for migratory birds from both North and South America.

The group will bird in two distinct regions:

- the tropical rainforests bordering the Panama Canal, and

- the midlands and highlands of Chiriquí Province in western Panama.

The group will visit well-known birding hotspots like Pipeline Road, see the Panama Canal's Miraflores Locks in action, and spend eight days immersed in the country's culture and natural landscapes.

Highlights include:

- Hiking the world-famous Pipeline Road, where target species include Black Hawk-Eagle, Purple-throated Fruitcrow, Masked Tityra, and hundreds of others.
- Scaling the Panama Rainforest Discovery Center's 130-foot

tower for the chance to see upper canopy species, including the coveted Blue Cotinga.

- Searching for Resplendent Quetzals in Volcán Barú National Park and on the Pipeline Trail in Boquete, near Costa Rica's border.
- Visiting Panama's highest elevation natural wetlands at Las Lagunas, 4,000 feet above sea level, to see Masked Duck, Chiriquí Yellowthroat, and Crested Guan.

See the trip website for details, map, itinerary, travel details and more:

holbrook.travel/saas-pa24.

Contact SAAS president Rob Snell (birdbrane1@gmail.com) for more.

Organizations: apply for a native garden by SAAS

SAAS invites area non-profit organizations to apply for its Native Garden Design and Installation program.

SAAS will pay for and install a small native perennial plant garden on the property of eligible organizations. These could include public libraries, museums, municipal property and other non-profits.

Native plant species:

- provide essential food for birds and food for other pollinators,
- promote biodiversity and ecological resilience and
- enhance otherwise neglected

spaces.

Native plants are the foundation of a bird-friendly property. Mown lawns and non-native plants create a food desert for native pollinators. Insects and birds pollinate and disperse seeds of native plants.

This initiative helps to transform outdoor spaces into vibrant, ecologically diverse habitats that benefit local bird populations and enhance the natural beauty of local properties. To apply, visit www.southernadironackaudubon.org/contact/.



SAAS expanded the native perennial garden at the Bolton Free Library in Bolton Landing in 2021. Pictured here are board members John Loz and Dusty Caldwell with Library director Megan Baker. Photo: Mark Silo

About Wildflowers

Blue Flag Iris

By Diane Collins, Wildflower Columnist

The Blue Flag (*Iris versicolor*) bloom, seen in late spring and early summer in northeastern wetlands, is a showstopper.

We can see these violet-blue flowers along the banks of the Feeder Canal, along the shores of the Hudson River by the Betar Byway in South Glens Falls, in wetland sections in Cole's Woods and at the edges of Hovey Pond in Queensbury.

Their captivating sepals are large and downturned, their lobes acting as landing pads easy for bees to find. Special markings on them are road maps leading the bees to nectar glands. Bees must be dazzled moving among these beautiful flowers and, by nature's clever design, carrying pollen from one to another.

The petals are smaller and often



Blue Flag Iris. Photo: Diane Collins.

erect, and the style is a broad colorful flap over the lower part of the sepals. The style of a flower is the stalk that supports the stigma and connects it to the ovary.

Well, enough of botany.

The plant was named by the Greeks for Iris, the goddess of the rainbow.

Folklore describes Iris as leading the souls of women to the Elysian Fields after they died. The name Iris is translated as "eye of heaven" and with its varied colors is part of the human eye. The Blue Flag iris is often linked to qualities such as faith, hope and wisdom. The name flag is from the middle English word "flagge" meaning rush or reed.

Blue Flag served as a medicinal plant among indigenous North American tribes. Powdered root was added to perfume and potpourri, and, most interesting, the two outermost fibers of the leaves were used to spin twine.

Indeed, irises meet today the Zero Waste Warren County initiatives of Repair, Reuse, and Recycle.

Wildflower photographer Diane Collins is the author of several local wildflower booklets, including the new Springtime Birds & Wildflowers along the Betar Byway, South Glens Falls. Visit www.southernadironackaudubon.org/order-betar-booklet/ to order a booklet. Collin's website is www.wildflowersinyourownbackyard.com.

Species Spotlight

Eastern Screech-Owls

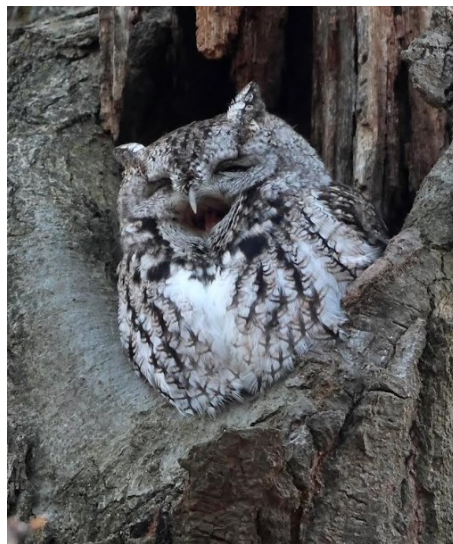
By Joyce Miller, SAAS Newsletter Editor

In March, author Jim Wright talked about his latest book, *The Screech Owl Companion: Everything You Need to Know About These Beneficial Raptors*, at the monthly SAAS program at the Saratoga Springs Public Library.

Eastern Screech-owls (*Megascops asio*) are relatively common, but most people aren't aware of them. They are small, only six to 10 inches, with a wingspan up to 24 inches. As with many raptors, females are slightly larger than males.

Most are a mottled gray color that blends in perfectly with tree bark. The red, or rufous, morph is present in perhaps a third of the Eastern Screech-Owl population. They live year-round in the eastern half of the United States.

They rest during the day and start hunting at dusk, listening and looking for prey from a perch. Their food includes large insects like moths and beetles and small animals like mice,



Past SAAS president Don Polunci photographed this pair of Eastern Screech Owls in South Glens Falls in January. The more common gray-phased is pictured here yawning. Its mate is the rarer red-phased Screech-owl.

frogs, small fish and even songbirds. These owls prefer to nest in tree cavities in wooded areas, especially near water. They'll use old woodpecker holes or human-provided nest boxes. Wright's book offers specific directions for nest boxes.

These owls live just a few years in the wild, but more than 14 years in captivity.



Both male and female vocalize, and the family vocalizes to keep in touch. Listen here to their trills, barks and hoots: www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Eastern_Screech-Owl/sounds.

Their predators include other owls, as well as hawks, raccoons, opossums and black rat snakes.

If the owls eat rodents that consumed rodenticides, they too will die from the poison.



Left: Skidmore Audubon Chapter's table with pinecone birdfeeder making among the other club and student art tables. Image credit: Abby Ast

Above, left: Students made pinecone birdfeeders to hang on trees around campus. Image credit: Abby Ast

Above, right: Crowd of Skidmore students on the lawn on Earth Day. Image credit: Skidmore Earth Day Committee

Earth Day at Skidmore College

By Lily Acierno, President
Skidmore College Campus Audubon Chapter

On April 20th, Skidmore College engaged in one of its biggest events of the year—Earth Day.

Students flood the lawn, where their peers sell their art, clubs table, and a palm reader tells fortunes, all in front of the massive stage showcasing Skidmore student bands and hired popular artists.

This year, the Skidmore Audubon Chapter was involved in the planning of this event to ensure that among the festivities, there was still a focus on sustainability. Featured films

played between the artists' sets highlighted environmental justice issues and inspired students to become more involved in conservation initiatives.

The Audubon Chapter was found among the tables, adding to the effort. With an enticing spread of pinecones, peanut butter, and seeds, students and visitors stopped to make their own pinecone bird feeders.

They then took their feeders with them and hung them around the quad, outside their residence windows, or in the local Northwoods forested area.

Audubon member Annie Obrecht shared that she “thought it was a super great way to create something that would impact the local birds on Skidmore’s campus.”

It was a peaceful moment for students to reflect on Earth Day and learn a bit about Audubon for a few minutes while doing a fun, sustainable activity in the midst of the chaos of the larger event.

The best part: watching their work pay off with all of the songbird activity around campus in the following days!

Cornell bird ID help

Want to learn more about birds? The Cornell Lab of Ornithology has created several useful resources.

- Many birders already use the Merlin app ([merlin.allaboutbirds.org/](https://www.merlin.allaboutbirds.org/)) on their phones to help identify bird songs. It's not 100% foolproof, but a great learning tool. Make sure to download the “US: Northeast” Bird Pack, or whichever packs match one’s birding location.
- A new “Bird Song Hero” quiz (academy.allaboutbirds.org/features/birdsong-hero/) helps birders match song spectrograms with actual bird songs. A short tutorial explains the game. The questions change with each visit and advance to an Ultimate level with more difficult questions.
- NestWatch (nestwatch.org) offers information on identifying nests and eggs, building birdhouses, as well as advice on tricky nest situations, when nests are placed in inconvenient spots. Birders can record bird nest findings on the site.
- Cornell Lab Bird Academy (academy.allaboutbirds.org/) offers online bird courses taught by ornithologists.



Carolina Wrens often nest near homes. Photo: Audubon DAM, Gary Flanagan/Audubon Photography Awards, 2021

- All About Birds (allaboutbirds.org/news/) is the go-to site for photos, songs, range maps, and more about birds around the world.



Above and right, scenes along the Willie Wildlife Trail's boardwalk and wooded paths in Fulton County. Photos: John Loz

Accessible birding trails

Willie Wildlife Marsh, Fulton County

By John Loz
SAAS Field Trip Coordinator

The Willie Wildlife Marsh is located just outside the Adirondack Park "Blue Line" in Fulton County in the Peck Hill State Forest.

Last summer, another SAAS board member and I visited this off-the-beaten-path marsh, south of Peck Lake. We found it to be a gem for easy hard-packed dirt hiking, but also for a peaceful birding location suitable for all ages.

The marsh features a loop trail that meanders in and out of forest habitat and along well-constructed boardwalks. The boardwalks run to a little island and then to open water, giving great views of the marsh and forest edges surrounding it.

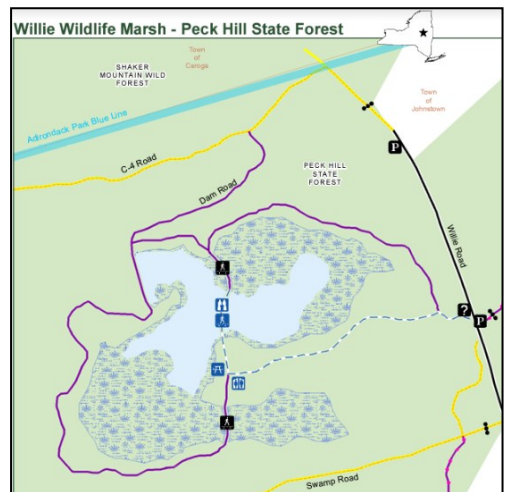
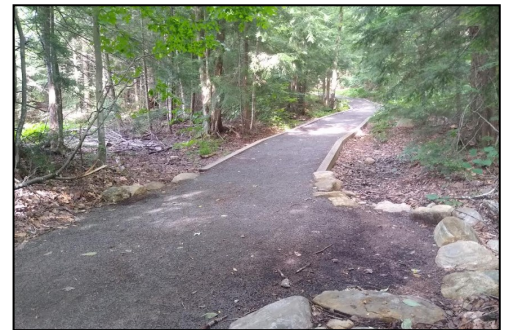
From the NYSDEC parking area on Willie Road, there is also a half-mile all-accessible, hard-packed dirt-stone dust trail leading to a long accessible boardwalk that bisects the open water.

The boardwalk has bump outs that allow those in wheelchairs to pass each other on the boardwalk, and more so, offer great views of the marsh pond, wetland, and forest areas on both sides. There is also an accessible bathroom and picnic table where the accessible dirt trail meets the entrance to the long boardwalk.



Above, a female Wood Duck pauses with two chicks on a log. Wood Ducks have been seen at the Willie Wildlife Marsh. Photo: Gordon Ellmers.

Right: The NYSDEC website has a map of the trail through the marsh.



Although the designated accessible trail was awarded a 2019 Trail Accessibility Award, be aware that surface conditions will vary with weather and time of year. The trails can get a little muddy in wet weather, so be aware of how you're traversing these trails.

The day we were there, it was a dry, sunny July day, and surprisingly, they were hardly any bugs.

We found Wood Ducks in the water and a number of songbirds singing in the woods, so go off the beaten path and while away your time in Willie's Wildlife Marsh!

Related Links:

- N.Y.S. Department of Environmental Conservation: Willie Wildlife Marsh, Peck Hill State Forest Map extapps.dec.ny.gov/docs/regions_pdf/mapwilliemarsh.pdf
- American Trails: Willie Wildlife Marsh: www.americantrails.org/communications/awards/willie-wildlife-marsh
- N.Y.S. Department of Environmental Conservation: Peck Hill State Forest: dec.ny.gov/places/peck-hill-state-forest.

Birds are active rain or shine, and so are birders!

These photos show a few of our events this year. Most photos are by SAAS program chair John Loz.



March 26, Saratoga Springs: Jim Wright discussed his book "All About Screech Owls" as the audience admired a tiny Eastern Screech-owl held by Trish Marki of Silent Wings Raptors Rehab and Education. This monthly program was held at the Saratoga Springs Public Library.



May 5, West Pawlet, Vermont: These smiling birders attended the "Birds on the Border" bird walk, held jointly with SAAS and Rutland County Audubon Society in West Pawlet on the D&H Rail Trail. RCAS President Nate Dansereau is second from right.



May 4, Saratoga Springs: SAAS member Rey Wells snapped this photo of a few of the birders on the First Saturday walk along the Spring Run Trail. Ray Perry (in center, wearing plaid shirt) lead the group.



March 30, Greenwich: Newly fledged birders practiced their binocular skills during the outdoor portion of the Beginning Birder Workshop at the Greenwich Free Library.



April 24, Greenwich: Joseph Sendzik presented "Dam It! Beavers and Why They Are Dam Important" at the Greenwich Free Library, for SAAS's monthly program.