



Volume 50

Number 3

# Quarterly Bulletin

of the

Bedford Audubon Society

Winter 2000

## President's Message

### Bedford Audubon Society: A Multimedia Production.

It wasn't too long ago, that BAS' only form of communication was through our newsletter, "*The Quarterly Bulletin*". The newsletter is a nearly 90 year tradition, which I predict will live on through many more generations of BAS members.

It wasn't until two years ago however, that one insistent Board member really drove home the idea that we could do a lot more to keep *all* of our membership and communities we serve, better informed. Shortly thereafter, the BAS website came into being. I now wonder at times, how we lived without it! Although the website is always undergoing change and expansion, the visitor will always find the information provided there, recent and updated. Programs, field trips, special events, conservation issues and more are all posted on the website. Please visit our website at [www.bedfordaudubon.org](http://www.bedfordaudubon.org)

But there is still more that BAS is doing to assist our members and friends. We have recently established an e-mail listserv that I encourage everyone to join. Through this listserv, you'll get reminders, changes and up to the minute information about BAS events and other region-wide conservation events. Many times we're so busy, that we forget that "tonight is the Audubon meeting". With the listserv, we'll send you the reminders you'll need. Please sign up and join our listserv via our website.

You may now shop with Bedford Audubon too. BAS has an on-line store offering thousands of quality outdoor products at reasonable prices. Field guides, optics, children's games, books, gift ideas and a whole lot more can be purchased from the comfort of your own home! Now when you shop for the holidays, you can support Audubon and your local environment at the same time. Our "e-store" may be accessed through the Bedford Audubon website. To those members who are not on-line, I thank you for continuing to read our newsletter, and calling our 24 hour/7 day information line at 914 232-1999.

As "Y2K" winds down to an end, I look back and see an organization hard at work, staffed by dedicated volunteers, supported by committed members, and fulfilling its mission of conservation and education. Thank to all for your devotion and generosity to Bedford Audubon Society in 2000. Happy Holidays!

John Aski Ilsen

### Our Mission

The Mission of the Bedford Audubon Society is to Promote Conservation and Protection of Wildlife Habitats in the Northern Westchester and Eastern Putnam Region through Education, Advocacy, Nature Study and Birdwatching.

## Who We Are

The Bedford Audubon Society, Inc., is a locally based 1,000 member chapter of the 550,000 member National Audubon Society. Founded in Bedford on February 13, 1913, today BAS services much of northern Westchester and Putnam Counties.

It is this organization's mission to promote environmental education, grass-roots activism, public and private conservation efforts, preservation and protection of open space. A full statement of the Society's mission may be found below.

To date, Bedford Audubon owns and manages over 558 acres of land at three sanctuaries, all located in north-eastern Westchester County. Our sanctuaries are open to the general public dawn to dusk and admission is free.

Programs and lectures are conducted the evening of the second Wednesday of every other month, excluding July and August. Field trips are conducted several times monthly and are also open to the public.

The Society is supported by membership dues, donations made by individuals, corporations, and foundations. The Bedford Audubon Society, Inc., is recognized by New York State and the U.S. Internal Revenue Service as a 501 (c) (3), not-for-profit, charitable organization.

The Quarterly Bulletin, the newsletter of the Society, is published four times yearly and is distributed to all members in good standing, and to nonmembers for a nominal annual fee. For further information on membership or activities, contact the BAS information line at (914) 232-1999, or via E-mail at [Bedfordaudubon@banet.net](mailto:Bedfordaudubon@banet.net).

## Birding Hotlines

New York City/Long Island Rare Bird Alert  
212-979-3070  
BAS Hotline, Chapter Activities 914-232-1999  
BAS Fax Number 914-232-5038  
BAS Website:  
[www.Audubon.org/Chapter/NY/Bedford](http://www.Audubon.org/Chapter/NY/Bedford)  
Our E-Mail address is:  
[BedfordAudubon@Banet.net](mailto:BedfordAudubon@Banet.net)

## The Quarterly Bulletin

Winter 2000

Volume 50, No. 3

The Quarterly Bulletin, USPS #61 is published quarterly by the Bedford Audubon Society, Inc.  
35 Todd Road

### Board of Directors 2000

John Askildsen	President	232-1701
Steven Ricker	1st Vice President	234-2934
Jackie Jones	2nd Vice President	666-2057
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David Albano	Education	225-9567
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Ken Mirman	Hawk Watch	277-5210
Ellen Epstein	Membership	666-7690
Pete Ainsworth	Newsletter	276-3837
John Erickson	Seed Sale	273-6967

### Committee Members

Bill Wallace	Field Trips	279-8858
Joan Mish	Field Trips	203-323-5137
Nelly Balloffet	Historian	941-8166
Barbara Reynolds	Hospitality	232-5632
Jack Seirup	Hunt Sanctuary	232-4871
Brenda Freeman-Bates	Programs	763-9489
Pam Harper	Publicity	242-2050
Steven Ricker	Seed Sale	234-2934
Ginny Powers	Trip Registrar	764-4320

Please submit any articles, ideas, events, or illustrations to:

Pete Ainsworth  
165 Arbor Crest  
Somers, NY 10589  
E-Mail: [HarryA@Bestweb.net](mailto:HarryA@Bestweb.net)

Articles should be submitted in 10 pitch Times Roman font as Word files.

*Shop with us on the Web  
at [www.Birding.com/Bedfordaudubonshop](http://www.Birding.com/Bedfordaudubonshop)*

## Field Trips

**Search For Wintering Owls  
with Michael Usai and Bill Wallace  
Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup> @ 8am**

Join Our Resident Expert Birders Mike and Bill to See Roosting Owls. Great-horned, Barred, Snowy, Saw-whet, Short-eared and Long-eared are all possibilities. Contact Registrar Ginny Powers at 914 764-4320

**Breakfast with the Birds  
at Westmoreland Sanctuary  
Saturday, January 27<sup>th</sup> @ 10am**

Join Sanctuary Director Steve Ricker for a Morning of Armchair Birdwatching. You and your Children Will Learn How to Separate Similar Looking Species and Identify the Common Birds That Visit Your Feeder. For More Information, Call (914) 666-8448.

**Catskill Bald Eagle Winter Weekend  
Friday evening February 2nd  
through Sunday midday 4th**

Call trip Registrar Ginny Powers at (914) 764-4320 for Reservations. Single Rate \$150.00 per person, Double Rate is \$115.00 per person/double occupancy (\$230.00) includes all lodging and meals. This is always a fun trip.

A Great Winter Weekend Getaway! Lots of Eagles, Beautiful Scenery, Terrific People and Great Food at an Authentic Victorian Inn.

**Winter Bird Walk at Croton Point Park with  
Naturalist Brenda Bates  
Saturday, February 10<sup>th</sup> @ 10am**

Search for Ducks, Feeder Birds, Bald Eagles and Other Birds. For information call (914) 271-8134

**Pot Luck Birding with John Askildsen  
Sunday, February 25<sup>th</sup> @ 8am  
Registration, Ginny Powers at 914 764-4320**

John will check the Rare Bird Alerts to see what birds of interest are lingering in the area. Will it be Jones Beach for Harlequin Ducks? Or Dutchess County for Golden Eagles? Call the Registrar to find out!

## Programs

**Wednesday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2001  
7:30 pm  
Katonah Village Library**

### **“Neotropic Migrants, Here and There”**

Townsend P. Dickinson has been a photographer, photo editor and photo researcher specializing in natural history and editorial photography for 25 years. His photographs have been widely published in hundreds of books, magazines and ads, including Audubon, Natural History Magazine, National Geographic, National/International Wildlife, Time Magazine, and commercial products, including TV.

Recently, freelance photo researching for textbooks has helped sharpen his image sophistication for educational endeavors. Townsend has been researching photographs for Elementary and College level textbooks for several publishers, Houghton Mifflin, McGraw-Hill, and Worth Publishers Inc.

One significant difference with Townsend's work is that he is following the migrants to their wintering areas to document their life when they are no longer "our birds but are someone else's birds for 6 to 8 months."

Please join us for presentation on January 10th at the Katonah Village Library.

**Wednesday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2001  
7:30 pm  
Katonah Village Library**

**Gathering and Preparing Edible Wild Plants by Jim Caposella**

Jim Caposella's lecture with visuals will bring the out-of-doors in. He will discuss many plants and plant groups including where to find wild edibles, poisonous look-alikes, best times to harvest, gathering tips and tricks, preserving wild foods, at-home preparation and best cooking methods.

As an outdoorsman, he relays how foraging can be an adventure through real life experiences and stories. He will have plant samples, hand-out sheets with recipes and safe foraging techniques, and is planning on bringing in a special home made wild edible treat for all to enjoy. Jim's program is yet another reinforcing issue of

(continued on page 7)

## Have You Volunteered Lately?

Bedford Audubon Society is made up of a group of dedicated volunteers who care about the future of our natural environment. If you have considered volunteering, please don't hesitate to give us a call, as all are welcome. At Audubon, one's level of knowledge is much less important than one's commitment to the cause.

We are currently seeking a volunteer to fill a Board position of Corresponding Secretary. For this position, we require an person with basic computer skills and access to e-mail. Most importantly, as a Board member, you must be available for Board Meetings (the third Thursday night of the month). Please call John Askildsen at 914 232-1701 to inquire.

There are many other areas of the Society's activities that require additional assistance. We look forward to hearing from you!

### Suet Recipe

By Jackie Jones

I often visit the websites of other Chapters of National Audubon Society, and am always impressed by the wealth of information they offer. A few weeks ago I found the following recipe which had been published in the on-line newsletter of the Birmingham Audubon Society.

I was intrigued by the title of an article written by Tom Clark, "Martha's Marvelous Suet for Birds". In the article, Tom says that he performed an experiment to see whether birds preferred a store-bought brand of suet cake, or Martha Sargent's own.

Tom went so far as to present a sample of each type of suet cake in identical feeders placed within a foot of each other and rotating them periodically. "No contest," he said. "Birds of all species literally ignored the store-bought brand whenever Martha's was available".

It was my intent to try this recipe immediately. However, I was unable to find the lard! I have since discovered (after checking the dictionary) that lard is rendered fat, so I'll try making my own. Meanwhile, for those of you who enjoy a personalized touch of feeding our feathered friends, here's the recipe for:

#### Martha's Marvelous Suet for Birds

- 1 cup crunchy peanut butter
- 2 cups quick cook oats
- 2 cups cornmeal
- 1 cup lard
- 1 cup white flour
- 1/3 cup sugar

Melt the lard and peanut butter over low heat. Stir in the remaining ingredients and pour into square freezer containers about 1½ inches thick to fit your suet basket. Store in freezer or refrigerator. Makes about 8 cakes. This suet will not melt or run in the summer, and is a great source of protein for young birds as well as their parents.

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### Join Audubon Today!

Yes, I would like to join the Bedford Audubon Society (a chapter of National Audubon).

I am enclosing this form along with a check made out to "The National Audubon Society, Bedford Chapter."

- Individual \$35.00
- Student \$18.00
- Introductory \$20.00

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Bedford Audubon Society  
35 Todd Road  
Katonah, New York 10536

Bedford Audubon Society, Chapter Code: R00 7XCH

## Mark Your Calendars!

The 4<sup>th</sup> annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) will take place February 16 through February 19, 2001. The GBBC is one of the Citizen Science projects sponsored by the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

What do you need to do? Simply count the birds in your backyard, local park, or other natural area on any or all of the four count days. You can spend as little as 15 or 30 minutes a day. All of the information is collected over the Internet.

Want to know more? Go to <http://irdsource.cornell.edu/> and click on Great Backyard Bird Count. Bird with a purpose!

We would like to hear from you if you participate. Email us at [info@bedfordaudubon.org](mailto:info@bedfordaudubon.org)

## Membership Options Now Available

Did you know that several membership mailing options are available to you?

Members may request that:

- Their name and contact information not be shared with outside organizations.
- No NAS mailings other than the Chapter newsletter, the magazine and one renewal notice be sent.
- No phone calls from NAS to solicit donations.
- No magazine be included with their membership

Members may make these requests by calling our office at 914 232-1999, or e-mail us at [membership@bedfordaudubon.org](mailto:membership@bedfordaudubon.org).

## The Bedford Audubon Store

So you say you need a new birding field guide? Your binoculars have finally quit on you? You need a new birdfeeder? No problem! Shop on Bedford Audubon's new on-line nature shop for all your outdoor nature needs. Not only will you be able to shop from the comfort of your own home, avoid the Mall and receive competitive pricing, but you will also be supporting BAS at the same time! Visit our store at:

<http://www.birding.com/bedfordaudubonshop>.

## Coffee and Conservation

by Steve Ricker

When you received your seed sale brochure this year, some of you may have wondered why Bedford Audubon chose to include the sale of shade-grown coffee! You may be surprised to learn that coffee – the beverage that has such an important place in our daily routines – also plays an important role in the lives of our migratory birds.

Traditionally, coffee farming in Latin America took place under the canopy of shade trees. Increasingly, however, traditional coffee farms are being replaced by industrial coffee farms where coffee is grown in full sun, on land stripped of all other vegetation.

Migratory birds that have already faced habitat loss on their breeding grounds and many areas of their wintering grounds, are able to find refuge in the lush environment of the traditional coffee plantation. Studies have shown that traditionally managed coffee plantations support over 150 species of birds. Ninety percent fewer bird species are found on sun-grown coffee farms.

By choosing to drink shade-grown coffee, you support the protection of habitat that the traditional plantation provides for a host of common and at risk migrants that use those plantations over the winter, including Wood Thrush, Golden-winged Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, and Black-throated Blue Warbler, to name a few.

Bedford Audubon Society is currently offering both regular and decaffeinated shade-grown coffee beans for sale at \$10 and \$11 respectively. Someone on your holiday gift list is sure to love it. We all do! Call or Email Steve Ricker to place your order (914-234-2934 or [AquilaSR@aol.com](mailto:AquilaSR@aol.com)).

## Bedford Audubon On-line

We are pleased to remind you that you may now visit our updated website to check the most current “goings on” of the Society. First visit us at our web site at <http://www.audubon.org/chapter/ny/bedford/>. Our web site has listed our most current events, field trips, and other happenings. Also, all Board Members and Committee Chairs are listed with e-mail addresses where possible.

## **NAS Adopts New Membership Strategy**

by Jackie Jones, Membership Committee

New "Membership Strategy Guidelines" were adopted by the Board of Directors of the National Audubon Society, at their September meeting in Casper, Wyoming. Bedford Audubon Society joined with more than 45 other Chapters in written protest to the changes. Our efforts served only to postpone the new strategy from January to June of 2001.

The new plan has several objectives. It is designed to recruit new members at the local level by offering Chapters stronger financial incentives, such as a rebate of 100 percent of the first-year dues of each new member recruited by the Chapter.

The plan is also designed to eliminate the shortfall in NAS's Membership Department budget by substantially cutting the amount of each renewing member's dues that National shares with the member's local chapter.

For many years, the "dues share" to Chapters has been a fixed amount of \$5.50 per member. That money is used, along with our other fund raising efforts, to cover the costs of our newsletter, programs, field trips, sanctuary maintenance, etc. Under the new plan, Chapters would receive amounts estimated between \$1.30 and \$2.60.

The amount of a member's dues that will be shared with their local chapter will be determined by the amount of money the Membership/Magazine budget has left over when all recruitment, renewal, and magazine production and distribution expenses, have been deducted from the total membership dues, magazine advertisement, and mailing list rental revenues.

Chapters have been offered a "safety net" feature, to protect them from the full impact of the severity of this reduction in income, during a three-year trial period.

Unlike many other Chapters of the National Audubon Society, Bedford Audubon has been less reliant on the annual dues share. Our members have generously participated in our Annual Appeal, Seed Sale, and Birdathon. Thanks to that generosity we expect to continue to provide you with a full range of programs and other services while remaining faithful to our stated Mission.

## **Historian's Column**

by Nelly Balloffet

Well, another little hiatus on the part of your historian. Just a year this time, a mere blip in the scope of things natural. I turned to the old newsletters for inspiration and decided to share some background information from 20 years ago.

In the fall of 1980, the Robert J. Hamerschlag Hawk Watch platform was completed. It was built as a joint project of Bedford Audubon and the Nature Conservancy to increase the public's awareness of birds of prey and also to provide a data collecting center for the Hawk Migration Association of North America. The site of the platform had been used informally for hawk watching for several years.

Robert Hamerschlag was president of BAS from 1950 to 1951 and later was the first chairman of Butler Sanctuary. A bronze plaque dedicated to his memory that had been installed on a rock at the preserve was destroyed by vandals in 1979. Tom Carrolan was the resident naturalist at Butler at the time and also served as president from 1980 to 1982. He proposed to the board that a hawk platform be built as a new memorial to Mr. Hamerschlag and the funds were approved in May 1980.

The newsletter mentions that the site is a good one since all 14 species of Northeastern nesting hawks have been observed there. In 1979, 2,983 hawks were sighted but I couldn't find a record of how many birds were counted in 1980. Compare and contrast with this fall's numbers.

(continued from page 3)

thing to eat while enjoying the serenity of our environs.

Jim Caposella is a full-time writer and communicator specializing in the outdoors. He is the author of 12 books on fishing, nature, and the outdoors, including How to Write for the Outdoor Magazines, Camp and Trail Cooking Techniques and Good Fishing Close to New York City. His most recent publication, The Palisades, was published by the Beczak Environmental Center and is a fund raiser for the organization.

### Bird Seed Sale 2000

The vast majority of those of us who support the Audubon Society have one thing in common, our love for birds. This passion is pursued in a variety of ways and combinations. One of the most common ways to enjoy birds is to feed them in our own front or backyards. In my case, some would consider it a mental one; feeders surround the entire house. Its like a direct dish network for bird watchers. Every window is another channel. Sometimes you see those reruns that you can never get enough of. Sometimes you come across a new exciting program that you hope doesn't get cancelled. This is one of the reasons that bird feeding and watching is one of the most popular pastimes in America.

Bedford Audubon has just completed our Annual Seed Sale Fund-raiser. We sold over 20,000 lbs of birdseed to many of you bird watchers. Our experience feeding birds has taught us that all birdseed is not created equal. Of course, the seed at the grocery store is cheaper. It is full of "filler" seed which most of your birds will throw on the ground were it creates a mess. In the long run this cheap seed probably cost more and you don't attract as many varieties of birds. Bedford Audubon provides you with the opportunity to purchase high quality seed at competitive prices, while supporting local conservation and environmental education. What more can you ask for?

Well, did you ever know that drinking a different kind of coffee could actually help the birds you love? This year we offered organic shade-grown coffee. Coffee grown with these methods preserves the forest canopy that is the habitat of so many of our summer visitors. If you are a java head you will definitely notice a difference in the taste. No pesticides, saves bird habitat, and tastes great! We still have some bags to offer. Decaf and Regular. Call me if you are interested.

If you purchased birdseed from us this year, thank you. If you are interested in purchasing birdseed next year please contact me at 234-2934. I will put your name on our mailing list. I would also like to thank the volunteers that participated in the bird seed pick up day. Pete Ainsworth,

Mauro and Lucy Guarino, John Askildsen, Anne Vasjabel, Jackie Jones, John Erickson, Riley Wilson, Jack Seirup, Andrew Reynolds, Jackie Bruskin, and Lisa Ricker.

Editors Note: This article was written by Steve Ricker in conjunction with John Erickson. For those of you who know these two men, you undoubtedly know their involvement with the Annual Seed Sale. To put it simply, there would not be a seed sale without their efforts. Thanks guys!

### The Fall 2000 Hawk Watch Results Are In

Hawk Counter Tait Johansson and Assistant Counter Nick Polato did an excellent job recording migrant birds of prey as they passed by the Robert J. Hamerschlag Watch at Butler sanctuary this fall. A total 17,428 migrant hawks, eagles, falcons and vultures were documented, which is a better than average total. This elevation in numbers may be attributed to having added the post of Assistant Counter for only the second time in the last four of 17 years of full-time counting.

The assistant Counter's position was designed to alleviate the Counter of having to perform visitor interpretation, while performing the tasks required of the counter. We hope to make this a permanently filled position. But there is more to the position than simply interpretation. The Assistant Counter works on public education programs, helps visitors identify migrant hawks and posts all data on the various websites that carry our data. This year's Assistant Counter, Nick Polato, came to us with very little knowledge of birds of prey, and left us as an expert!

The Fall 2000 data show a continuing decline in species such as Sharp-shinned, Red-shouldered Hawk and Northern Harrier, that have been identified as being of concern by various state and federal wildlife agencies. Other species continue to show a positive gain such as Turkey and Black Vulture, Bald Eagle and Osprey. The Hamerschlag Hawk Watch on average records the highest fall totals in all of New York State. Below are the totals for each hawk species identified at the hawk watch:

SPECIES			
Turkey Vulture	2028	Broad-winged Hawk	10896
Black Vulture	21	Red-tailed Hawk	736
Osprey	324	Rough-legged Hawk	1
Bald Eagle	25	Golden Eagle	4
Northern Harrier	90	American Kestrel	538
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1862	Merlin	42
Cooper's Hawk	327	Peregrine Falcon	16
Northern Goshawk	15	Unidentified hawks	419
Red-shouldered Hawk	84	TOTAL	17428

Bedford Audubon Society, Inc.  
35 Todd Road  
Katonah, NY 10536

***Inside Scoop:***

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**Name or address change?**  
**Call National Audubon at**  
**1-800-274-4201**

*Serving Communities in Northern Westchester and Eastern Putnam since 1913*