



# Quarterly Bulletin

of the

Bedford Audubon Society

Volume 51, Number 1, Spring 2001

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## Third Annual Birdathon!

by Jackie Jones

Bedford Audubon will hold its third annual *BIRDATHON* from 5:00pm on Friday, May 11th, until 5:00pm on Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup>. Any funds raised will be used to support the programs of our Education Committee, including a scholarship award to a local high school senior. The object of a Birdathon is to count as many different species of birds as you can, within a prescribed period of time.

In the past we have had three teams birding in areas that spanned from Long Island to Dutchess County. Those who wished to bird more locally joined several of our Board members at Westmoreland Sanctuary. Part of the fun is meeting everyone at Westmoreland at the end of the count, to tally up the total number of species seen by all who participated. And then, of course, there's the pizza that goes with it!

We would love to have you join us in this effort. You can form a team of friends, count what you see in your own back yard, or join one of the already established teams. You can count for all or part of the twenty-four hour period. If you can get friends or businesses to sponsor you by making a donation "per species" of the birds that you identify, that would be great. With or without sponsors, however, join in the fun!

To register, or to get more information call: Steve @ 666-8448, Jackie @ 666-2057, or John @ 273-6967.

## BAS in the Schools

by David Albano

Bedford Audubon Society's Education Committee has taken on two projects this year to promote our mission in the local schools.

The first project is implementing the *Project Feeder Watch* in Fox Lane High School and in Fox Lane Middle School. The teachers involved in the program are Carrie Sears, Ruth Anne Fanarri, Mike Terlizzi, and Gerry Casedei. Carrie and Ruth Anne have involved about one hundred students, at different intervals, since the program began.

Carrie said there is a lot of excitement about simply seeing the birds each day. Some students and teachers are so taken with bird watching that they have set up feeders at home, as well.

In the high school, Mike Terlizzi has connected the Feeder Watch Program to his Advanced Placement Environmental Science class. The feeders are tended to by this class and by the Preserve the Planet Club.

A second high school feeder site is located in Bedford Hills, at the

Academic Community (ACES). Biology teacher (and former Bronx Zoo ornithologist) Gerry Casedei has set up the feeder and hopes to use it as a way for students to do original research.

One aspect of Project Feeder Watch is the ability to enter data on-line through the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. This allows students to participate in nationwide data collecting and to assess their own data as well as the data of numerous other sites.

The second Bedford Audubon Society project is an *Ornithology/Environmental Science Scholarship*. The BAS Chapter will award a scholarship to a senior who has done scientific research in an area that affirms the mission of Audubon. Students will submit, and possibly present, their work to the Bedford Audubon Board to be judged. Those interested in the scholarship or the Feeder Watch Program can contact David Albano (845-225-9567).

(David Albano is a teacher at the Academic Community in Bedford Hills and serves on the Board of the Bedford Audubon Society and chairs the Chapter's Education Committee.)

**Visit us and shop with on-line at  
[www.Bedfordaudubon.org](http://www.Bedfordaudubon.org)**

## **Who We Are**

The Bedford Audubon Society, Inc., is a locally based 900 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.

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 Bedford Audubon Newsletter 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 visit our website at [www.Bedfordaudubon.org](http://www.Bedfordaudubon.org).

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### **Board of Directors 2001**

John Askildsen - President, 232-1701; Steven Ricker - 1st Vice President, 234-2934; Jackie Jones - 2nd Vice President, 666-2057; Anne Vajsabel - Recording Secretary, 845-229-1938; Jack Seirup - Treasurer, 232-4871; Drew Reynolds - At-Large, 232-5632; Donald Pachner - Conservation, 234-6618; Jim Utter - Conservation, 845-878-0081; David Albano - Education, 845-225-9567; Jonathan Powers - Finance, 764-4320; Ken Mirman - Hawk Watch, 277-5210; Ellen Epstein - Membership, 666-7690; Jackie Bruskin - Membership, 961-8903; Pete Ainsworth - Newsletter, 276-3837; John Erickson - Seed Sale, 273-6967

### **Committee Members**

Ed Fehrs - Development, 273-3631; Bill Wallace - Field Trips, 845-279-8858, 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, 234-5489

Steven Ricker - Seed Sale, 234-2934; Ginny Powers - Trip Registrar, 764-4320 (All telephone numbers are area code 914 unless otherwise indicated.)

### **Hotlines**

NYC Area Rare Bird Alert 212-979-3070  
BAS Activities Hotline 914-232-1999  
BAS Fax Number 914-232-5038  
BAS Website: [www.Bedfordaudubon.org](http://www.Bedfordaudubon.org)  
E-Mail address: [Info@Bedfordaudubon.org](mailto:Info@Bedfordaudubon.org)

### **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.

## **Programs**

**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 relates 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 preserving open space and will send us all off into the woods looking for something 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.

See our Annual Meeting Notice  
on Page 5

## **Birds of the Great Swamp**

by Jim Utter

(an excerpt from Friends of the Great Swamp newsletter)

Among all of the wildlife we encounter in our daily activities, birds are the most diverse and entertaining. They are colorful, active, vocal, and share our most active time and space. Bird watching is the fastest growing outdoor activity. The economic investments in books, binoculars, clothing and lodging associated with this activity rivals the money spent on hunting.

The Great Swamp offers us excellent birding opportunities and a chance to enjoy a very diverse avifauna all year long. This amazing wetland provides breeding, overwintering, and migration stopover habitats for a large number of bird species.

During the past four years, Bill Wallace and I have been surveying the birds in the Great Swamp and have recorded over 180 species, with about 100 species breeding in the swamp. Some of these species like the red-winged blackbird are widespread, while others like the marsh wren and sora rail are extremely localized and not often seen.

This diversity of species, and the concentration of particular species, such as the wood duck and solitary sandpipers seen during migration, led to the unanimous endorsement of the The Great Swamp as one of National Audubon Society's Important Bird Areas in New York State (1998).

### **Where to go Birding in the Great Swamp**

**Patterson Environmental Park.** This Town Conservation Area off South Street in Patterson Village is one of the best places to see the variety of swamp forest birds and

some of the shrub swamp species. Park on South Street and walk down the dirt road to the river. There is a network of trails off the dirt road that wind their way along the edge of the swamp. This is an excellent site at all seasons, but especially in spring and summer.

**Dutcher Avenue Marsh.** This is the most accessible marsh in the Great Swamp and is one of the largest. Owned by the Oblong Conservancy, it is located on the south edge of Pawling Village. Limited roadside parking is available at the north and south ends of the marsh on Dutcher Avenue. Do not park near the fire station.

**Green Chimneys School.** This is a popular access point for canoe trips. The main parking area is located on the west side of Doansburg Road opposite the school. Walk past the pavilion to the river. The boardwalk gives you an elevated view through the swamp.

**Clough Preserve** is located on the west side of Farm-to-Market Road north of Brewster High School. From the parking lot follow the trail through an upland forest with patches of hemlocks to the edge of the shrub swamp and on to Ice Pond. The tracks on this side of the pond are rarely used, but be cautious nonetheless.

**River Road** crosses the Great Swamp between Route 22 and West Dover Road just north of Pawling Village. Park along the road near the bridge across Swamp River.

*Jim Utter is Assistant Professor of Environmental Science at SUNY-Purchase, an accomplished ornithologist, and a member of the BAS Board. Jim and his students have been studying the Great Swamp for many years. Forward copies of your observations in the Great Swamp to: Jim Utter, Friends of the*

*Great Swamp, P.O.Box 373, Pawling, NY 12564.*

### **We're Only a Mouse-Click Away**

For those of you who have internet-capability and have not browsed our website, go to [www.bedfordaudubon.org](http://www.bedfordaudubon.org) and find contact information, the latest newsletter (and archives of old ones) field trips, program listings, Chestnut Ridge hawk watch statistics, our birdathon and seed sales, or the latest educational projects hatched by board member David Albano of Bedford-Mt. Kisco School District. When you visit our web site, make sure to visit our *ON-LINE STORE* which features discounts on a wide variety of merchandise, from binoculars and scopes to field guides and recordings! When you shop online with us, you also help support the programs of Bedford Audubon!

## **BAS Addresses Local Conservation Issues**

by Don Pachner

Most members who read our local, regional and national newspapers are not aware of Bedford Audubon's prolific public conservation work in Westchester and Putnam Counties. It is important to note the all the excellent conservation work on regulatory issues, environmentally destructive real estate development, or protection of our wild open spaces and wetlands, that the Chapter engages in, is performed by volunteers in their spare time.

This past year, for example, Jacqueline Bruskin testified before the Westchester County Board of Legislators about the dangers of pesticides and the need to ban their use on county-owned properties (no doubt due to her presence, this legislation was passed!). John Askildsen and Vinnie Butkiewicz were instrumental in the Chapter's attempts to block construction of a drinking water filtration plant (really a chemical plant) from encroaching on Sarles Street wetlands. Jim Utter spent countless hours promoting scientific research in, and protection of, the Great Swamp in Putnam County, through BAS and Friends of the Great Swamp (many members do not realize that our territory extends north through eastern Putnam County.)

Most recently, BAS engaged an attorney to fight an inappropriate easement, which was expected to impact the wetlands of one of our sanctuaries on Mt. Holly Road. As a result, the developer was forced to make concessions on the wetland crossing. And, lastly, Don Pachner testified at Town of Patterson ZBA hearings against an environmentally destructive super mall proposed for a hillside off Exit 18 of Interstate 84. An incredible turnout of Patterson and

Carmel citizens packed the hearing room during this exciting and emotional hearing (reminiscent of a first-run movie) asking pointed questions that resulted in denial of the requested zoning variance!

Don has also provided testimony and written comment in the public record and met with public officials to provide the environmental/wildlife point of view on a number of New York City Watershed issues and wetlands regulatory issues before the New York City Council and The US Army Corps of Engineers. This includes the successful battle of local environmentalists to reduce the size of the proposed widening of Route 120 near Westchester County Airport.

We can only continue with our work if volunteers from our Chapter area are willing to take the time to speak at public hearings, or write letters to public officials and government agencies. We will be happy to take the time to train you, if necessary, in how to speak at hearings, and how to write public comment on potentially damaging government regulations or projects. You don't have to be an expert when you start, and the education you will receive is tuition-free! For copies of some of our comment see the conservation section of our website:  
[www.bedfordaudubon.org](http://www.bedfordaudubon.org)

To volunteer, contact Don Pachner (914-234-6618) or John Askildsen (914-232-1701).

## **Field Trips**

Please remember to always bring binoculars and appropriate footwear on field trips. \*Call Trailside Museum, \*\* Call Trip Registrar.

### **March**

\*\*Sunday, March 25 @ 1pm

Early Spring Bird Walk at Ward pound Ridge Reservation with Tom Meyer and John Askildsen.... Phoebes have just arrived and Bluebirds have begun to nest. Spring is in the air! Meet at the Trailside Nature Museum.

### **April**

\*Sunday, April 22 @ 7pm

*The Flight of the Timberdoodle...*  
Witness the flight display of the American Woodcock. Meet at Trailside Nature Museum.

\*\*Saturday, April 28 @ 7:30 am

*The First Wave....*Join John Askildsen to look for newly arriving spring migrant warblers and more. Meet at the Trailside Nature Museum.

### **May**

\*\*Fri-Sun, May 4-6

*Delmarva Penninsula/Cape May Weekend* with John Askildsen.... Explore the bird rich Mid-Atlantic bottomlands and exquisite marshes of this land between the Chesapeake and Delaware Bays. Upon our return, we'll make a ferry crossing to Cape May, NJ for more spectacular birding. This trip begins on Friday.

\*\*Sunday, May 13th @ 7am

*The Ramble, Central Park, Manhattan* with John Askildsen...

(continued on next page)

(continued from page 4)

Each Spring, Central Park comes alive with dozens of colorful warblers. They are attracted to this island of green within the "concrete jungle." Don't miss this opportunity to enjoy one of Spring's foremost birding joys.

\*\* Sunday, May 13 @ 2 pm

*Mother's Day Wildflower Walk* at The Trailside Nature Museum with Beth Herr.

What could be a better way to spend quality time with your family? Join Beth and enjoy some of Mother Nature's delicate treasures.

\*\*Sunday, May 20 @ 7 am

*Bashakill Marsh, Catskill Mountains* with John Askildsen... Bashakill Marsh is a 2,200 acre freshwater wetland in the southern Catskills. A wide array of pristine habitats attract an enormous number of locally breeding and migrant birds. Bald eagle, wood duck, osprey, rails and golden-winged warblers are likely to be seen.

\* Call The Trailside Nature Museum at (914) 763-3993 for additional information.

\*\* Call Trip Registrar Ginny Powers for reservations and information at (914) 764-4320.

**Annual Meeting Invitation  
April 29th  
2:00 pm  
at the John Jay Homestead  
State Historical Site**

Join us at our annual meeting for an afternoon of sharing information about the Bedford Audubon Society.

We will review the highlights of the past year, discuss the future and elect our new board of directors.

We are very fortunate this year to have J. Henry Fair as our guest speaker. Mr. Fair will present a slide/video program on The Wolf Conservation Center. He will take us through many of the facts and fables regarding these fascinating creatures. Learn about the social structure of a wolf pack and gain a better understanding of how their survival affects the environment.

This promises to be a fascinating presentation. Please join us!

See the photograph below of a captive Mexican Gray Wolf at the Wildlife Conservation Society's Bronx Zoo.

**EAGLES UP CLOSE**

The BAS annual Bald Eagle weekend was another resounding success. We were treated to many breathtaking views of eagles of various ages. Did you know that it takes five years for the Bald Eagle to achieve its glorious full white head and tail? One of the ways to age eagles is to note the amount of white they have on their heads and tails.

Each year in early February we take a trip into the Catskills to visit some of the favorite wintering sites of Bald Eagles in the northeast. We visited sites along the Delaware River and within the Mongaup/Rio Reservoir area. By using our cars as blinds, we were able to get several close views of these magnificent birds of prey. We were also treated to an exciting view of a Red Fox, brilliant against the snow. Wild Turkeys and Common Mergansers were abundant, and we even spotted a Belted Kingfisher.

There was plenty of snow on the ground and the breeze was brisk. But we never stayed out of the car very long and returned to the warmth of Mike Fraysse's Sports Resort as often as possible. We were welcomed with wine and cheese and treated to hearty meals all weekend. On Saturday evening we enjoyed a visit from the founder of the Eagle Institute.

Join Us, Won't You?

Yes, I would like to become a member of The Bedford Audubon Society, a chapter of National Audubon. I am enclosing this form along with my check made out to "The National Audubon Society, Bedford Chapter."

\_\_\_ Individual Membership \$35.00  
\_\_\_ Student Membership \$18.00  
\_\_\_ Introductory Membership \$20.00

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

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

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

Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to: Bedford Audubon Society  
35 Todd Road  
Katonah, NY, 10536**

*Audubon is a worthwhile organization to support!*

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