



The Bedford Audubon Society Newsletter

Volume 58, Number 4, Winter 2008-2009
Celebrating 95 Years of Conservation 1913-2008

President's Letter

I hope everyone has enjoyed their Thanksgiving holiday and trust that you are all well in these trying times of worldwide economic uncertainty. Nonetheless, we have many things to be thankful for this season, and I would like to share some of them with you in this letter.

We have recently completed conservation easements with Westchester Land Trust to protect the rest of our sanctuaries. (See article on page 4.) These easements are proof of our strong commitment to habitat protection, water conservation, and sheer enjoyment of natural beauty for a lifetime to come.

Cameron Rutt has been our hawk watch intern at Arthur Butler Sanctuary and has done a fabulous job submitting daily reports of observations. These are posted on our website. He has been utterly dependable and ready to accommodate us. We offer him our thanks and wish him well in his future endeavors.

We are thankful for our members and friends who helped at our seed sale and those who purchased seed. It is an important fundraiser for us and we greatly appreciate the help. (See article on page 3.)

We are thankful for the volunteers who help us bring to fruition our many programs and events and help at our property! I especially want to express our gratitude to Laura Jaffe, our volunteer office manager; to Ted Raymond, for all his help in the garden and around Bylane Farm; and to Tricia O'Donnell, who turns this newsletter into a work of art. It is people like them that do it. They ARE Bedford Audubon.

I cannot say enough about our Events Chairperson, Carol Gracie. I can remember a time when only a handful of people attended our monthly lectures. Carol has performed her magic with a diversity of programs each month that attracts all kinds of audiences. As many as 65-80 people now attend the programs, a tribute to the range of top-notch speakers Carol assembles. We are thankful to have her with us. Don't miss the December 10 program at the Katonah Memorial House about Slime Molds. Remember, we are not just about birds!

John Askildsen has returned to our board of directors. John has dedicated over 25 years of service to BAS. He rejoins us as head of the development committee and to work on a new membership program. Welcome back, John!

Our Year End Appeal will be mailed soon, and we need your support. Your donations go directly toward our programs and events and to our scientific projects. We have had to dip into our endowment this year to make necessary repairs at Bylane Farm and to pay higher energy costs. Please contact us if you would like to dedicate your donation to some specific use, e.g. our lecture series or our hawk and eagle monitoring projects. We truly appreciate your assistance.

One last item. Bedford Audubon is growing and increasing its role as an integral part of the future of conservation in our immediate area and surrounding towns. We have come to realize that as an all-volunteer board, we can no longer perform all the tasks and efficiently run our organization and meet our goals. The board of directors has therefore decided to hire an executive director. Deliberations about the right candidate are still ongoing. I look forward to introducing him or her to you in the next newsletter.

Wishing you the best for the holiday season and a rewarding new year!

Tony Ianniello

The Bedford Audubon Society Newsletter

Winter 2008-2009, Volume 58, No. 4
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35 Todd Road, Katonah, NY 10536

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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.



BAS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

12/9	9 a.m.-3 p.m.	Field Trip to Edith Read Sanctuary and Marshlands Conservancy
12/10	7:30 p.m.	Myxomycetes! The Enigma of Slime Molds — A Window to the Imagination/ Katonah Memorial House
12/12	9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	"A Bronx Extravaganza"
12/20	8 a.m.-4 p.m.	Peekskill Christmas Bird Count
2009		
1/7	10 a.m.-noon	Nature Hike at Hunt-Parker Sanctuary
1/14	7:30 p.m.	Demystifying Bird Photography/ Katonah Memorial House
1/17	7:30 a.m.-3 p.m.	Winter Walk in the Meadowlands
1/22	9-11:30 a.m.	Nature Hike at Croton Point Park
2/7	8:30 a.m.-1 p.m.	The Great Hudson River Excursion
2/11	7:30 p.m.	Reptile Ecology and Conservation in the USA/ Katonah Memorial House
2/18	9 - 11:30 a.m.	Nature Hike at Franklin-Fels Sanctuary (Walk for Drew)
2/28	3:30-5 p.m.	Bald Eagle Survey and Visit to Black Rock Park
3/11	7:30 p.m.	Reading the Forested Landscape/ Katonah Memorial House
3/24	9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	Usher in Spring at the Bronx Zoo

Autumn Field Trip: Manitoga

By Carol Gracie



On a sunny, but cold and windy, fall day in October, Carol Gracie took a group to Manitoga in Garrison, NY. Manitoga, meaning Place of the Great Spirit in the Algonquin language, was the home and studio of the 20th century designer, Russel Wright. Wright was, perhaps, the Martha Stewart of the mid 20th century, branding

home furnishings, tableware, linens, and other household items with his own name. He and his wife, Mary, believed that good design should be affordable to the masses. Their simple, modernist designs were much admired and became popular household items particularly during the 1930s through 1950s.

Following a most informative tour of Wright's house, studio, and garden, the group had a picnic lunch and then enjoyed a hike on some of the lovely trails that Wright developed on his 75 acres. Wright believed in naturalist landscaping and incorporated his house into the surrounding rocks and trees so that it almost seems a part of the natural surroundings. He restored the quarried and lumbered land with native vegetation, often strategically placing large boulders for their best effect and opening "windows" in the trees for views of the Hudson. His designer's eye allowed him to create an environment that, although well designed, appears completely natural.



Seed Sale 2008! A Special Thank-You

By Tony Ianniello



I am pleased to say that through the generosity of our participating membership, this year's seed sale was another success for Bedford Audubon. You understood that you were not just buying birdseed, but that the proceeds from this event go directly to continuing our mission of educating the public about preserving habitat and water

quality for our future. This is not about birdseed! Birdseed is just one of our vehicles on a path to a sustainable world. The birds thank you in either case!

We knew that this seed sale could very well have been very difficult for us. Our seed supplier retired, other suppliers went out of business, and prices were way up, all due to the oil crisis and economic downturn. Trucking costs also impacted seed prices. Some Audubon centers stopped their seed sales. Orders were a bit down from last year, but nevertheless we did very well.

Pick-up day, November 1, could not have been more pleasant. When I arrived at Bedford Hills Town Park, long-time Bedford Audubon seed-sale committee co-chairs Steve Ricker and John Erickson had everything completely organized. Steve was in the truck moving bags of seed around so that cars could easily be loaded. John had arranged all the order forms to make it easier for our helpers to sort the many varieties of seed.

Volunteers came to help throughout the day. Margaret Freifeld, Riley Wilson, Ted Raymond, Seth Schultz, and Nannette Orr were on hand, and we thank them for their assistance. I also want to thank the community of Bedford Hills, Town of Bedford, for its support in allowing us to use the park each year for this event.

McCoy Transport Inc., of Katonah, picked up the seed at our supplier, delivered it early, and left their truck in the park for us, thus protecting the seed from potential inclement weather and alleviating any worries that the shipment would be late, and made Steve's job more than a little bit easier! Thanks.



About Birds: The Pine Siskin

By Tait Johanson



By Lloyd Spitalnik

The Pine Siskin (*Carduelis pinus*), a small, gregarious finch closely related to the American Goldfinch (*Carduelis tristis*), is an irregular visitor to our area. This fall has seen a tremendous movement of this species into the northeast, likely due to food shortages in the boreal forests to our north in Canada and northern New England and New York.

This species is much the same size and shape as a goldfinch, with slightly more pointed wings and tail tips, and with a slightly thinner, more pointed bill. The upperparts are a light grayish-brown overlaid with darker brown to blackish streaking, while the underparts are very light brown to white, also overlaid with dark brown streaking, save for a oval-shaped white to very light brown patch in the center of the belly. The wings are black to dark brown, with wingbars and primary edgings ranging from whitish to yellow (males tend to have the most yellow). The upperside of the tail is dark brown to black, with varying amounts of yellowish at the edges, and the underside is dark brown to black in females, and dark only at the tip in males, with yellow replacing the dark brown on most of the tail's underside. A yellow wingstripe is visible in flight, especially when the bird is backlit. The overall effect is of a rather drab, stripy, stubby little finch.

Siskins have several distinctive call notes—the most often heard, especially from birds in flight, is a high, ringing "tillyeer!" which is often useful for detecting their presence. Less often, a raspy, rising "zhrreee" and a quiet, low "chut-chut" or "chut-chut-chut" are heard.

As their name suggests, Pine Siskins are often associated with conifers: pines, spruces, firs, larches, and arborvitae are all used for food, cover, and nesting. They will also often eat birch and alder seeds. Siskins are early nesters, starting breeding activity in late winter and early spring, and were once discovered nest building in upstate New York as early as February 19.

Outside the breeding season, this species is usually found in small to large flocks and many, many, such flocks have been moving through our area this fall. From mid-October through mid-November, a total of 13,226 siskins have been recorded whizzing by our own Chestnut Ridge Hawk Watch in locustlike swarms on their way south, with a single-day high of 2,524 on October 13. Weighing in at an average of .53 oz each (according to the *Sibley Guide to Birds*), 13,226 of these birds works out to a little over 439 pounds of siskins this season, a hefty number for such a small bird.

Some coastal locations have recorded even higher numbers, with a single-day total of 6,800 reported at Jones Beach on the morning of November 10, and a season total of 24,406 (808 lbs.!) at the Lighthouse Point Hawk Watch in Connecticut. These huge fall numbers probably indicate that there will be at least some, and possibly many, of these little finches hanging around Westchester and Putnam counties into this winter, so be sure to keep an eye out for them at your feeder, and to stock up on thistle seed.



Wintering Eagles Return to Westchester and Putnam Counties

By Nannette Orr and John Askildsen

Bald Eagles are now winging their way to their wintering grounds all across North America. When northern breeding grounds freeze over, eagles move south to more temperate locations where food is more readily available. Fortunately, Westchester and Putnam Counties are among the few locations for wintering Eagles in the northeast. A few years ago, Bedford Audubon Society's Science Committee, in partnership with the New York City DEP, embarked on an exciting plan to census our wintering eagle population. The purpose of this ongoing project is to help monitor the significant concentrations of wintering Bald Eagles in the Lower Hudson River Important Bird Area. Results of last year's survey can be seen on our website at www.bedfordaudubon.org/eagles/2008eagles.pdf.

BAS is looking for volunteers for this season's roost site monitoring

This project will continue this winter with the monitoring of roost sites in Westchester County. A cadre of dedicated BAS volunteers will be out monitoring three sites on a weekly basis, from late December 2008 through March 2009. We are seeking additional volunteers to join us in this exciting citizen science project. We especially seek volunteers residing near Georges Island and Verplanck. Please contact Resident Naturalist Tait Johansson at 914-232-1999, e-mail to tjohansson@bedfordaudubon.org or Committee Chair Nannette Orr at 914-232-3334, e-mail norr@bedfordaudubon.org, for more info and details on how you may help. No experience is necessary!

In conjunction with our eagle monitoring project, BAS, under the leadership of John Askildsen, will partner with the NYCDEP at the popular Winter EagleFest sponsored by Teatown Lake Reservation on February 7, 2009. BAS and NYCDEP will have an eagle viewing/information station at the New Croton Dam in Cortlandt, historically a major eagle roosting site. The New Croton Dam is located between Route 129 and Reservoir Road. We will have information on eagles' wintering and breeding ranges, feeding habits, and much more. Volunteer spotters will be on-hand with telescopes to show you eagles and other birds on or near the Croton Reservoir. Don't let the cold keep you from coming out to see us! We will have a "warming tent" set up with hot drinks to keep you toasty-warm while viewing eagles!

For additional information on the BAS Wintering Eagle Census project and the EagleFest, please visit www.bedfordaudubon.org. See you in the field!!!



The Christmas Bird Counts Return

By John Askildsen

The Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC), now in its 109th season, is the world's largest and oldest citizen science project. Counts are conducted in all 50 states and in all 13 provinces and territories of Canada as well as other countries in North and South America. The individual counts are the lifeblood of the Audubon CBC whose collective data provide a "snapshot" of bird numbers at this time of year.

BAS will do its part by conducting the 54th Annual Peekskill CBC on Saturday, December 20, held within a circle with a 15-mile radius in Northern Westchester County. Our group will cover a variety of habitats including forest, field, swamp, stream, and lake in search of wintering birds. Both bird species and individual numbers will be recorded. Join us and get to meet others who share an appreciation for the natural world, while contributing vital data for the assessment of the health of the avian community. At the end of the day, you are invited to the compilation, which includes a hearty potluck dinner. The \$5 participation fee helps cover many of the CBC's costs including production of the annual CBC summary issue of *American Birds*, which all participants will receive. Whether you are a novice or an experienced birder, reserve your space by contacting John Askildsen by phone at 845-677-3993 or by e-mail to jaskildsen@bedfordaudubon.org.

There will be two other Christmas Bird Counts in our area. The Greenwich-Stamford CBC, on Saturday, December 14, will be organized by Brian O'Toole and Gary Palmer. To participate or for more information contact Brian at botoole@audubon.org or 203-869-5272 ext.228. The Putnam County CBC, coordinated by Charlie Roberto, will be held on Saturday, January 3. Charlie can be contacted at chasrob@optonline.net or 914-271-0840.



BAS Completes Conservation Easements

By Tony Ianniello

In accord with our mission to promote conservation and protect wild-life habitats, we are pleased to announce that all our sanctuaries are now protected in perpetuity. Recently signed conservation easements will protect our 208-acre Franklin-Fels Sanctuary in the Town of North Salem and our 25-acre Palmer H. Lewis Sanctuary in the Town of Bedford from ever being developed. The sanctuaries will remain open to the public for hiking, bird watching, nature studies, and appreciation of the natural beauty of the landscape. They will stay "forever wild" and thus make a vital contribution to conservation of open space in Northern Westchester County. Adjacent to the Croton watershed, these properties help secure the water quality of this important source of drinking water for millions of people.

It is especially gratifying for us at Bedford Audubon to see the Franklin-Fels property included in this conservation easement and to be able to preserve, forever, the hard work of our dear friend Drew Reynolds, who established the trails at this sanctuary. What a wonderful legacy for his family! Drew passed on last year and we all miss him.

Conservation easements with the NYC-DEP already protect of our 318-acre James Ramsay Hunt and Mary Welsh Parker Sanctuary in the Towns of Lewisboro and Bedford.

BAS would like to thank our friends at Westchester Land Trust in Bedford Hills, which will hold the easements and monitor the property on our behalf.



Chestnut Ridge Hawk Watch Update

By Cameron Rutt

As we near the conclusion of the 2008 hawk watching season at Bedford Audubon Society's Chestnut Ridge Hawk Watch, I'll take the time to look back at this year's highlights. The watch was initiated on 22 August, a day that despite containing only 20 migrating raptors included 3 Bald Eagles, a sign of things to come. Almost three months later, and with only a few days left to tally the final raptors (the last count day is slated for 20 November), a number of season records have already fallen. All-time seasonal high counts have been set for four species (Black Vulture, Bald Eagle, Cooper's Hawk, and Peregrine Falcon) with only 130 more Turkey Vultures needed to eclipse the previous high mark. The previous Bald Eagle record was set back in 1996 when a total of 51 birds were observed. This year's 94 birds to date obliterated that prior figure!

	2008 Totals	Average *
Black Vulture	49	4
Turkey Vulture	1899	759
Osprey	529	373
Bald Eagle	94	21
Northern Harrier	160	140
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2499	2494
Cooper's Hawk	520	233
Northern Goshawk	5	13
Red-shouldered Hawk	129	108
Broad-winged Hawk	9379	8161
Red-tailed Hawk	268	527
Rough-legged Hawk	0	1
Golden Eagle	5	6
American Kestrel	486	610
Merlin	70	39
Peregrine Falcon	32	14
Total Identified Raptors	16,124	13,504

*Seasonal averages span the years 1983–2007 (excluding 2003–2006 during which no functioning watch was conducted at Chestnut Ridge). Altogether this includes 21 years of data.

Overall, 2008 was an above average year in many respects. Only Northern Goshawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Golden Eagle, and American Kestrel migrated by Chestnut Ridge in less than average numbers. Of these, the only real surprise was the relative lack of truly migrant Red-tailed Hawks. Perhaps northern birds are simply waiting for that next arctic cold front or the onset of consistently cold weather to settle in further north. Whatever the case, the Red-tailed's smaller, more highly migratory relative, the Broad-winged Hawk, more than made up for any deficiency. An awesome 5473 Broad-winged were seen passing by Chestnut Ridge on 18 September, the unequivocal best flight day this season (5579 raptors in total). Perhaps even more impressive was the fact that 4472 of this total was recorded within a mere three hour timespan in the afternoon. All in all, over 8000 Broad-winged Hawks were counted during just five days in mid-September (15–19 September), making this passage a must-see event for next fall.

Aside from raptors, a number of other notable migratory events made this a particularly memorable season. Noteworthy season totals include: Brant (712), Canada Goose (8772), Ruby-throated Hummingbird (284), Cedar Waxwing (2482), Pine Siskin (13,266+), and Monarch butterflies (1497). The Pine Siskin migration, par-

ticularly, included an astounding number of individuals and Chestnut Ridge played a leading role in quantifying this perhaps unprecedented invasion. Look for an upcoming article in *The Kingbird*, New York's state ornithological journal, detailing the Ruby-throated Hummingbird migration (and perhaps the massive Pine Siskin exodus) in the near future.

Additionally, a few rare avian finds were detected during the three month vigil. Perhaps most unusual was a young Iceland Gull attempting to blend in among a flock of Herring Gulls (23 October), what must be a first sight record from Chestnut Ridge. Only a few days prior (17 October), a Red-throated Loon obliged onlookers by pairing up with a much larger Common Loon in high migratory flight. Lastly, a White-winged Crossbill was observed zipping overhead, calling repeatedly (12 November), hopefully leading the way for what could be a unique crossbill event in the region this fall/winter.

Finally, I would like to thank the Bedford Audubon Society for providing me the wonderful opportunity to participate in and catalog a season's worth of avian migration. Truly, this was an invaluable experience for me.



FIELD TRIPS

Unless otherwise indicated, please register with Joan Becker: jebecker@bedfordaudubon.org or 914-232-4806

Many trips meet at or leave by carpool from Bylane Farm, 35 Todd Road, Katonah. (From Route 35, take Route 22 north. Go 1/2 mile and turn right on to Todd Road. Follow to #35.) For these carpool trips, we give the departure from and estimated return to Bylane times.

Note: Each trip is given one of three levels of difficulty: *E* (easy), *M* (moderate) or *S* (strenuous). Please discuss your level of mobility with the registrar to ensure that the field trip is appropriate for you.

Field Trip to Edith Read Sanctuary (Playland) and Marshlands Conservancy, Rye With Tait Johansson

Tuesday, December 9, 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

Located on the shore of the Long Island Sound, along the Atlantic migratory flyway, the 179-acre Edith Read Sanctuary is home to a great diversity of marine life. In winter, the 85-acre lake, a mixture of salt and fresh water, hosts over 5,000 ducks. The sanctuary has been recognized by National Audubon as an Important Bird Area due to its significant habitats and flyway.

Marshlands Conservancy, located off Route 1 in Rye, is also on the migratory flyway. This 173-acre wildlife sanctuary is composed of a diversity of habitats—forest, meadow, salt marsh, and seashore. The preserve has three miles of trails and one-half mile of shoreline along the Long Island Sound. Bring lunch and dress warmly. (*E*)

We're repeating last year's smashing success!

"A Bronx Extravaganza!" Field Trip to The New York Botanical Garden's Holiday Train Show, Visit to the Arthur Avenue Market, and Lunch at Pasquale's Rigoletto With Bedford Audubon Director Carol Gracie

Friday, December 12, 9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

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From November 23 through January 13, the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory at the Botanical Garden is one of the favorite holiday destinations in New York City. It has a unique appeal to a wide audience, from children, who marvel at the trains that crisscross the exhibit; to architects, who admire the exquisite reconstruction of New York City landmark buildings; to botanists and gardeners, who eagerly study the botanical materials used to recreate the dozens of buildings.

The field trip will have the added advantage of the expertise of Carol Gracie, who has worked at The Garden for over 30 years. After visiting the Holiday Train Show, the group will stop at the vibrant Arthur Avenue market in the “Little Italy” of the Bronx and then go to the popular Pasquale’s Rigoletto Restaurant for lunch.

A \$12 per-car parking fee applies except for members of NYBG. An admission fee of \$20 (\$18 for seniors; free for members of NYBG) applies as well. Lunch is not included. Registration is limited to 10 people, so sign up early for this popular excursion! (E)

**The Peekskill Christmas Bird Count with John Askildsen
Saturday, December 20, 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.**

To participate, email John at jaskildsen@bedfordaudubon.org or call him at 845-677-3993.

See article on page 4 for more information about the Christmas Bird Count.

**Nature Hike at Hunt-Parker Sanctuary With Tait Johansson
Wednesday, January 7, 10:00 a.m.–noon**

After the holidays, a nature walk is a solace to body and soul. This leisurely stroll through the meadow and woods will focus on trees in winter. Even without leaves, trees and bushes are easily identifiable at this time of year, especially when Bedford Audubon’s knowledgeable naturalist Tait Johansson is at hand. Bring binoculars (you may still see winter birds) and dress warmly! Come back to Bylane Farm for hot cider and cookies! (E-M)

**Winter Walk in the Meadowlands With Biologist and Naturalist
Michael Newhouse and BAS Director John Askildsen
Saturday, January 17, 7:30 a.m.–3:00 p.m.**

The Meadowlands and its expansive wetlands have long been recognized as a critical resource for wildlife, especially birds. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has designated the Meadowlands/Hudson River Complex as part of New Jersey’s North Atlantic Coast Waterfowl Focus Area and converted it into a unique urban wildlife preserve. The Sawmill Creek Wildlife Management Area is a 900-acre wetland complex within the Meadowlands District, which supports large numbers of waterfowl and shorebirds during migration.

Trip co-leader Michael Newhouse is a former research biologist at the Institute of Ecosystem Studies in Millbrook, NY. He is now a naturalist with the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission. His most recent research has focused on the spread of Lyme disease in small mammal populations. (M)

**Nature Hike at Croton Point Park, Croton-on-Hudson
With Tait Johansson**

Thursday, January 22, 9:00 a.m.–11:30 a.m.

Carpool from Bylane Farm or join the group at Croton Point Park at 9:30

Bedford Audubon naturalist Tait Johansson will lead a walk at this impressive Hudson River nature park. Highlights may include sightings of Bald Eagles and a couple of species of owls that make the Point their

winter home. Numerous species of ducks can also be seen out on the river and along the shore. (E)

**The Great Hudson River Excursion With John Askildsen
Saturday, February 7, 8:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.**

Carpool from Bylane Farm or meet at the Croton River Landing, past the Croton train station at 9:00 a.m.

The Hudson River in winter attracts thousands of ducks and geese and a variety of birds of prey including Bald Eagles, both Black and Turkey Vultures, hawks, and even ravens. BAS board member John Askildsen will guide us to several locations along the river for a leisurely and entertaining day of wildlife watching. This field trip coincides with Teatown Reservation’s EagleFest. Bring lunch or purchase it at a local deli. After the trip, make sure to stop by the DEP and Bedford Audubon’s warming tent at the Croton Dam. Further details will be provided on our website www.bedfordaudubon.org. (E)

**The Second Annual “Walk for Drew” Nature Hike at Franklin-Fels Sanctuary With BAS Naturalist Tait Johansson
Wednesday, February 18, 9:00 a.m.–11:30 a.m.**

Join Bedford Audubon naturalist Tait Johansson for a walk through Bedford Audubon’s lesser known sanctuary in North Salem. The preserve has a few steep inclines and generally provides for easy walking. Bring binoculars. This walk is in memory of Andrew Reynolds, known to us as “Drew,” who died suddenly on February 7, 2008. The inaugural walk was held on March 18, 2008. Drew was a long-time friend, member and supporter of Bedford Audubon. Since one of Drew’s main contributions to BAS was surveying and marking the trail system in Franklin-Fels Sanctuary, we feel it appropriate to honor him with an annual walk there. (E-M)

Bald Eagle Survey at the Croton Dam and Visit to Black Rock Park, Croton-on-Hudson With Tait Johansson and Bedford Audubon Volunteers

Saturday, February 28, 3:30 p.m.–5:00 p.m.

Join the BAS eagle survey volunteers to learn more about Bald Eagles and their increasing presence in our area. We’ll demonstrate how the data for the survey is collected and used in larger scientific eagle studies. If conditions are right, we will also take a trip to nearby Black Rock Park, where an impressive number of duck species often congregate in winter. Last year’s report “Monitoring of Wintering Bald Eagles in Westchester and Rockland Counties 2008” is available on our website at www.bedfordaudubon.org/eagles/2008eagles.pdf. (E)

Late Winter Trip to Eastern Long Island

This trip is being planned for birding and hopefully to catch a glimpse of the elusive Tiger Salamander. Please check the website www.bedfordaudubon.org for updates on this trip. Members will be notified in advance on the BAS listserve. You can sign up for this convenient service at www.bedfordaudubon.org/events.html. Your email will not be shared with any other organization.

**Usher in Spring at the Bronx Zoo With Joan and Peter Becker
Tuesday, March 24, 9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.**

Experience one of the Tri-state area’s premier attractions with long-term Bedford Audubon members and bird enthusiasts Joan and Peter Becker. Come eyeball-to-eyeball with Laughing Kookaburras, Pink-cheeked Cockatoos, Andean Condors, Tufted Puffins, High-flying Hornbills, and Helmeted Curassows to name only a few of exotic the species you will ogle in the world famous House of Birds, the Sea Bird Colony, Aquatic Bird House, Birds of Prey Aviaries, and duck-filled Northern Ponds. And what zoo trip would be complete without visiting Madagascan lemurs, great bears, snow leopards, Zoo admission fee applies. (E)



PROGRAMS

All programs are free and open to the public.

PLEASE NOTE: Until further notice, the monthly lectures will be held at the Katonah Memorial House.

Katonah Memorial House is wheelchair accessible.

Please do not block the Fire Department access.

Park alongside the meeting house side of the driveway.

Myxomycetes! The Enigma of Slime Molds — A Window to the Imagination With David Rose, Past President of the Connecticut-Westchester Mycological Association (COMA) Wednesday, December 10, 7:30 p.m.

Katonah Memorial House, 71 Bedford Road, Katonah

In this illustrated talk, David Rose will explore the natural history of myxomycetes, commonly known as “slime molds.” Slime molds are colorful, harmless organisms that inhabit damp woodland environments. So perplexing to science that they have been classified variously as animals, plants, and fungi (they are actually protists), these organisms are remarkable for their delicate beauty and their surprising transformation from an animal-like to a plant-like stage. Though they are not mushrooms, slime molds reproduce by spores and have traditionally been studied by mycologists for their resemblance to the fungi.



David W. Rose is an archivist, writer, and past president of the Connecticut-Westchester Mycological Association (COMA). As archivist, he has organized the records of many prominent mycologists and botanists at The New York Botanical Garden, and as consulting archivist he has processed the Charles Horton Peck Papers of the New York State Museum and the records of the North American Mycological Association (NAMA). Since 1998 his

column, “Notes from Underground,” appeared in the COMA newsletter, *Spores Illustrated*, and now appears in *FUNGI*, a journal of amateur and professional mycology. “Notes from Underground” is a periodic essay using literary models and historical perspectives to explore the backwaters of mycology: the poetics of fungi and the individuals who have studied their marvels, all to illustrate that “mushrooms are a window to the imagination.” David is presently Archivist of the March of Dimes Foundation and author of the first photographic history of the foundation in the *Arcadia Images of America* series.

Demystifying Bird Photography: Pointers and Pitfalls With Photographer Sean Sime Wednesday, January 14, 7:30 p.m.

Katonah Memorial House, 71 Bedford Road, Katonah.



Northern Flicker

By Sean Sime

Like bird watching, bird photography has enjoyed a tremendous increase in interest in recent years. Nowadays it seems that almost everyone is an amateur bird photographer. Now you can learn from the Pro and help improve your skills as Sean Sime shares his methods for taking stunning photos of birds.

Sean Sime, a self-proclaimed “photographer and bird nut” received a Master’s degree in Photojournalism and Documentary Photography at the International Center for Photography in New York. He resides in New York City and spends hours at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge in Queens with his camera ready for the prize-winning shot. Sean has also traveled around the world, providing photo documentation for UNICEF in Africa and photographing endangered species in South America. The

results of his combined interests in birds and photography have appeared in many publications including *Life Magazine*, *The New York Times Sunday Magazine*, *North American Birds*, and *Birder’s World*.

Reptile Ecology and Conservation in the USA With Herpetologist Peter Warny Wednesday, February 11, 7:30 p.m.

Katonah Memorial House, 71 Bedford Road, Katonah.

Bedford Audubon is pleased to welcome back **Peter Warny** for a lecture on his passion and field of expertise – reptiles. His presentation will focus on conservation of snakes, turtles and alligators, as well as ongoing ecology and conservation projects and habitat management.



By Phillip Auerbach

Peter Warny, “The Reptile Man,” has worked for National Audubon and the Nature Conservancy on conservation projects both locally and in National Audubon Sanctuaries around the country. He is currently a research associate in the herpetology lab at Western Connecticut State University and an

associate researcher for the New York State Museum in Albany. Peter has been studying the behavior and habits of snakes, turtles, frogs and salamanders since childhood.

Reading the Forested Landscape With Terrestrial Ecologist Tom Wessels Wednesday, March 11, 7:30 p.m.

Katonah Memorial House, 71 Bedford Road, Katonah.

“It is wonderful to know nature through one-on-one encounters with other organisms, but it is perhaps more empowering to gain a fuller understanding of the patterns that have shaped its landscapes... Reading the landscape is not just about identifying landscape patterns; more importantly, it is an interactive narrative that involves humans and nature...” Tom Wessels (1997).

This program is based on Tom’s book, *Reading the Forested Landscape, A Natural History of New England*. It introduces people to approaches used to interpret a forest’s history while wandering through it. Using evidence such as the shapes of trees, scars on their trunks, the pattern of decay in stumps, the construction of stone walls, and the lay of the land, it is possible to unravel complex stories etched into our forested landscape. This process could easily be called “forest forensics” since it is quite similar to interpreting a crime scene.



Tom Wessels is a terrestrial ecologist and founding director of the master’s degree program in Conservation Biology at Antioch University New England in Keene, New Hampshire. He serves as an ecological consultant to the Rainforest Alliance’s SmartWood Green Certification Program and in that capacity, helped draft

green certification assessment guidelines for forest operations in the northeastern United States and adjacent Canada. Tom has conducted landscape level workshops throughout the United States for over 30 years. His books include *Reading the Forested Landscape*, *The Granite Landscape*, *Untamed Vermont*, and *The Myth of Progress: Toward a Sustainable Future*.

Tom will have copies of *Reading the Forested Landscape* available for sale and signing.



Bedford Audubon Membership

Yes, I would like to join the Bedford Audubon Society. My local chapter membership will help support local conservation efforts, programs, and sanctuaries. (Send this form with a check made out to **Bedford Audubon Society** or fill in the **MasterCard/VISA credit card information** below.)

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Enter your e-mail address here and we add you to our e-mail list for alerts on programs, field trips, and other items of local interest.

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We will always be able to preserve and care for our beautiful sanctuaries, but if you, like us, want to share their beauty with others, expand the public's appreciation of nature, and their desire to protect it, then we need you.

This is why I am asking you to renew your support for the incredible array of local projects we do—projects that exemplify the goals we all believe in. Let's take this moment to celebrate all that we have achieved, and all we can achieve in the future. We do need you! Contributions may be made by credit card on our website or mail a check to:

Bedford Audubon Society, Inc.
35 Todd Road
Katonah, New York 10536

Please be as generous as you can and contribute today. And don't forget to see if your company has a matching gifts program.

Thank You,
John Askildsen
Development Committee Chair

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