



The Bedford Audubon Society Newsletter

Volume 57, Number 4, Winter 2007-2008
Celebrating 94 Years of Conservation 1913-2007

President's Letter

Happy Holidays to all our friends, volunteers, and staff! We appreciate all the support you have given to Bedford Audubon Society this year.

This winter, we are offering our members a variety of programs, field trips, and practical information, thus continuing our mission of preserving natural habitats, promoting sustainability and ecology - and also having some fun. With this in mind, I want to tell you about the Audubon New York State Council Meetings, which serve to reinforce the need to continue doing our share to preserve our future and acknowledge the fact that everything we all do really does make a difference!

John Hannan and I attended the semiannual meeting held during the weekend of October 19-21 at the newly dedicated Montezuma Audubon Center in Savannah, NY, near Cayuga Lake. John is the President of the Council and the meeting was held in memory of Geoffrey Cobb Ryan, founder and past president of NYC Audubon, who passed away in August. The Audubon center is at the site of the 36,000-acre Montezuma Wetlands Complex that includes the federal Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, the state Northern Montezuma Wildlife Management Area, and lands owned by conservation groups, farmers, and other private landowners. What a fabulous place!

Throughout the weekend, we had the chance to network with other Audubon chapter leaders from around the state and share our experiences and projects. We attended workshops and field trips designed to help us learn methods to improve our skills in promoting actions to curb Global Warming, assist us in our endeavors to develop IBA projects, and help us manage and develop our chapters. Having the vast Montezuma refuge just outside our windows underscored the importance of Audubon's work in establishing and promoting policy resolutions for conservation and the funding of these resolutions.

One workshop focused on the state of the birds in New York State. An analysis of 40 years of Christmas Bird Count data provided by citizen scientists, combined with data from the U.S. Geological Survey, has shown that five bird species, the Grasshopper Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Ruffed Grouse, Field Sparrow, and the Common Tern, have declined between 80% and 98% since 1967. The main reasons are grasslands overrun by invasive species, intensive agriculture, maturation of forests due to a lack of forestry management, habitat loss from development, over-browsing by deer, and fragmentation of habitat. In the spring, Bedford Audubon will help document bird species in local IBAs, and the data will be compiled statewide and nationwide to compare trends in different areas.

Global Warming was a main thrust at the Montezuma meeting, and all Audubon chapters are urging their members to conserve water, lower their thermostats, buy local produce, use compact fluorescent bulbs, conserve fuel by "thinking before driving," and plant a tree for summer shade. We have replaced as many light bulbs as we can around Bylane Farm, and will be better insulating the building to prevent costly heat loss around windows, doors, and the attic.

Bedford Audubon is again taking part in the Christmas Bird Count this year. Please see contact information inside this newsletter. Carol Gracie and her Events Committee have a program scheduled on December 12 on the history of the count featuring Geoffrey LeBaron, Director of the Christmas Bird Count for the National Audubon Society. Please join us for this exciting lecture and enjoy home-made holiday treats!

The hawk watch at Arthur Butler Sanctuary over the past several months revealed over 5,500 raptors, several species - including Cooper's Hawk and Sharp-shinned Hawk - in record numbers. This winter, for the second year, Bedford Audubon will be monitoring Bald Eagles along the Hudson River, a designated IBA, between January and March. We are proud to be involved in preserving this vital part of New York State's heritage. Please consider volunteering for the Bald Eagle survey.

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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

12/1	7:30 a.m.	Field Trip to Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge
12/4	9-11 a.m.	Nature Hike at Franklin-Fels Sanctuary
12/12	7:30 p.m.	The Christmas Bird Count: From Historical Conservation to 21st Century Science/Katonah Village Library
12/13	9:00 a.m.	Field Trip to the New York Botanical Garden's Holiday Train Show
12/15	8 a.m. - 4 p.m.	The Annual Christmas Bird Count
	<u>2008</u>	
1/9	7:30 p.m.	Native Ferns in Your Garden/Katonah Village Library
1/13	3:30-5:00 p.m.	Bald Eagle Survey at George's Island Park
1/16	8:30 a.m.	Nature Hike at Croton Point Park
2/7	9-11 a.m.	Nature Hike at Hunt Parker Sanctuary
2/10	8:30 a.m.	The Great Hudson River Excursion
2/13	7:30 p.m.	Past, Present and Future at Ward Pound Ridge Reservation/Katonah Village Library
3/9	3:30-5:00 p.m.	Bald Eagle Survey at the Croton Dam and Visit to Black Rock Park
3/12	7:30 p.m.	Why We Should Teach Evolution, Not Intelligent Design/Katonah Village Library
3/15	7:30 a.m.	Field Trip to Jones Beach
3/18	9-11 a.m.	Nature Hike at Franklin-Fels Sanctuary



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Recently, our Buildings and Grounds Committee decided to replace the underground fuel oil tank at Bylane Farm. By the time you read this newsletter, work will have started on removing the 1500-gallon oil storage tank nestled under the front lawn. I am sure that many of you have considered doing the same at your own home. Not only is an underground fuel tank an environmental liability; it also impacts future mortgage lending on your property and your tank insurance. I myself have installed an above-ground tank in my basement.

We are doing the right thing at Bylane for the future of Bedford Audubon Society and are trying to set an example and educate our members. Please look for an article in our next newsletter that will describe the fuel tank mitigation results and also advise homeowners on what steps to take and what information to seek in going about this process.

And, as our Audubon Public Policy Fact Sheet says, observe the Three Rs (Recycle, Reuse, Reduce)!

Wishing you the best for the holiday season!
Tony Ianniello



Clancy Moving Systems supports Bedford Audubon Society

Bedford Audubon Society would like to thank Rosemary & Dan Clancy at Clancy Moving Systems for their generosity in storing our book collection for a future library. Their family business started in the Bronx over 75 years ago, and now occupies a 65,000 square foot headquarters facility on Rte 22 in Patterson, NY.

Seed Sale an Overwhelming Success!



It was a breezy cool day on Saturday, November 4, the seed sale pickup day at Bedford Hills Town Park. As usual, Steve Ricker and John Erickson, Bedford Audubon seed-sale committee co-chairs for many years now, had everything completely organized. We

are lucky to have Steve & John with us and we again salute you and your families in making this year's sale a great success.

We had a crowd of volunteers on hand to help out throughout the day. Special thanks go to Adam Zorn, naturalist at Westmoreland Sanctuary, ever-faithful Riley Wilson, Jack

Kozuchowski, Ted Raymond, and our own directors, Nannette Orr, Janet Andersen & Tony Ianniello.

Pictured is Jack Seirup, former director of BAS and seed sale volunteer, with his grand-daughter, stopping by for his order, and Helle Raheem, BAS director and communications chair, sandwiched between John Erickson and a rear view of Riley Wilson, waiting for a bag of seed.



Tree Walk at Bylane, November 7.



A chilly, but sunny morning greeted the 12 people, who came to Bylane Farm to join Tait Johansson for his monthly nature walk. The focus this month was on the trees and shrubs of the Bylane property, and

Tait once again demonstrated his extensive knowledge of the natural world. He willingly answered the many questions posed during the walk, which ranged from devastation by



deer in local woods and the age of the old sycamore, to the effects of global warming. An additional attraction this Wednesday morning was the presence of



Matt Heineman, a free lance TV photographer with the local Lewisboro Channel 20, who recorded the walk and interviewed some of the participants. The program was broadcast multiple times on the station during the week of November 17.



Volunteers Needed for Bald Eagle Survey!



Immature Eagle soaring over George's Island Park.

By Richard L. Becker

For the last 10-12 years, Bald Eagles have been wintering along the Hudson River and the Croton Reservoir in ever increasing numbers. Eagles come to the region to fish in the mostly open waters of the river and the reservoirs, which in the winter months also harbor a large number of ducks, a Bald

Eagle delicacy. The area has been designated an Important Bird Area (IBA) of the Lower Hudson River Valley due to the number of wintering birds.

Last year, Bedford Audubon conducted its first-ever winter eagle monitoring project with support from Audubon NY. The goal of the project was to get an approximate count of the number of eagles using the Hudson River from Ossining to Bear Mountain and the Croton Reservoir as roosting sites. Last year, many vol-

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unteers took on the role of citizen scientists participating in counts that were conducted simultaneously at three eagle roosting sites twice a week from January through March.

This year, we are again looking for volunteers to help count roosting eagles. Surveys will be conducted (for 1-2 hours in the late afternoon) every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday from the beginning of January to the end of March. Roosts at Croton Point, Croton Dam, George's Island, and Iona Island will be observed. Please contact Tait Johansson at (914) 232-1999 or tjohansson@bedfordaudubon.org, if you are interested in participating. Please indicate time available and birding experience.



The 108th Annual Christmas Bird Count Weekend of December 14-16, 2007

The annual three-week Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) will start on December 14 and run through January 5. It is America's longest running and largest natural history census and is an event that appeals to people of all levels of skill, whether novice or expert.

The CBC is the epitome of Citizen Science, where bird enthusiasts spend the day in the field counting birds and contributing data to Audubon's large electronic database of accumulated information on the whereabouts of wintering birds in the Americas.

In 2006, 2,052 counts were conducted in the US (1,624), Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean over the period. The CBC registered 57,851 participants (44,965 in the US) – a record number - who counted more than 69.3 million birds of 1,894 species.

There are three CBCs being conducted in our area. The Peekskill count will be led by **John Askildsen**, askildsen@verizon.net, 845-677-3993. The Putnam County count will be coordinated by **Charlie Roberto**, ccamroberto@verizon.net, 914-271-0840, and compilers for the Greenwich-Stamford Christmas Bird Count, which will be held on Sunday, December 16, will be **Brian O'Toole and Gary Palmer**, botoole@audubon.org, 203-869-5272 ext.228. To participate in the Count, please contact one of the above mentioned compilers.

You can learn more about the Audubon Christmas Bird Count by logging on to <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/index.html>. See you at the CBC!



Enjoying Wildflowers in Winter

By Carol Gracie

Most people feel that once the last gentian has bloomed, the wildflower display is over for the year. However, the wildflower season can be extended throughout the winter if you turn your attention to the remnants of wildflowers that can be found in the fields and forests of our area. Searching for evidence of summer's colorful floral beauty on a cold, snowy day can provide the incentive to get outdoors and enjoy nature during the less colorful time of year.

Looking for "winter wildflowers" offers the opportunity to learn winter botany identification and something about the life history of the plants. It's easier in winter to notice the spherical or elliptical galls on the stems of goldenrod that harbor the larvae of flies and moths, respectively. A winter walk may also provide you with other opportunities like deducing what might have happened when the tracks of two different animals meet in the snow or the surprise of seeing "snow fleas" (springtails) and stoneflies moving about on the snow in February. Of course, you'll have the pleasure of enjoying our winter birds as well.

Many of these wildflower remains have a beauty of their own as evidenced in the pale golden interior of the "pods" of common milkweed that grace meadows and roadsides during late fall and winter or the sculptural form of teasel. This is best appreciated when the plants are silhouetted against a snow-covered landscape. A dusting of snow on the plants themselves serves to enhance their beauty.

In many cases, the visible wildflower parts seen in winter are the remnants of fruits that developed from the flowers of summer and fall. Some of these are quite attractive in winter bouquets or may be effectively used in wreath-making. However, if you collect them for this purpose, always leave some of the plants in place as they provide perches and sometimes food – in the form of seeds – for birds. And be sure to shake the seeds out of those that you do collect to insure that the flowers will grow again the following year.



Common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) pods in snow

The plant parts visible in winter vary with the species. In the milkweeds, it's the split fruits, or follicles, that remain; in mints, it's the calyx or group of calices (the usually green part under the corolla) that are the showy remnants; in beggar's ticks, it's the spine-tipped achenes (fruits comprised of a single seed fused to the fruit wall) that get caught on our pants and

socks to be transported to another place; and in mustards (e.g., garlic mustard and poor man's pepper), it's the thin membrane to which the seeds were attached within the fruit. Other plants make their presence known by rosettes of green leaves produced in their first year of growth. Examples would be the biennial mullein with its downy, pale green leaves and the evening primrose, both usually found in close proximity to the second year plants with upright stalks of opened capsules that will spread the seeds to start the cycle again. Wildflowers with evergreen leaves include the spotted wintergreen with white-striped leathery green leaves and the rattlesnake plantain orchid with its beautiful, and surprisingly delicate, reticulated white on green-patterned leaves.

To learn to recognize wildflowers in their winter form, try locating the plants during the time that they are in flower, and then follow them as they transform into their winter guise. There are guides to help you recognize the plants in winter; my favorite is *A Guide to Wildflowers in Winter* by Carol Levine illustrated by Dick Rauh. Carol spoke on this topic for Bedford Audubon in the winter of 2005.

By being out of doors looking at plants throughout the year, you'll also be among the first to notice the early signs of spring – skunk cabbage leaves poking through the snow and the delicate blossoms of hepatica and bloodroot that brave the still chilly temperatures of early April.



FIELD TRIPS

Special thanks to **Milady Valdez** for volunteering as our trip registrar for the past year and a half. She took great care in making sure that all our field trips ran smoothly. We all wish her well in her upcoming extensive travel plans for the new year. On January 1, 2008, **Joan E. Becker** will take over the task of trip registrar. Let's all welcome Joan, a familiar and hard-working volunteer for Bedford Audubon Society for many years. Many of you have seen Joan on our field trips and we are excited to have her as registrar.

Registration in December: Please register for all field trips (except where noted) with trip registrar, Milady Valdez, (914) 962-5474 or by e-mail to mvaldez@bedfordaudubon.org.

Registration after December: Please register for all field trips (except where noted) with trip registrar, Joan Becker, (914) 232-4806 or by e-mail to jebecker@bedfordaudubon.org.

**Field Trip to Edwin B. Forsythe (Brigantine) National Wildlife Refuge, Smithville, NJ With John Askildsen
December 1, 2007. Departure (carpool) from Bylane, 7:30 a.m. Return around 5 p.m.**

New Jersey's coastal wetlands have long been the preferred habitat of large numbers of Atlantic Brant and the American Black Duck - a species which has suffered major population declines over the years.

On the 9-mile drive through the Refuge, we can also expect to see large flocks of Snow Geese that winter in the salt marshes. Flocks of Dunlin and other shorebirds may still be around. With luck, we may get a glimpse of the white plumage of a Snowy Owl hunting over the salt marshes and impoundments. We should see many species of migratory ducks, which are overwintering at the refuge. Sea ducks, showing mostly black and white plumage, can be seen bobbing in saltwater areas. Dress warmly and bring lunch and hot drinks.

**Nature Hike at Franklin-Fels Sanctuary With Tait Johansson
Tuesday, December 4, 9-11 a.m.**

Meet at Bylane Farm, 35 Todd Road, Katonah. Carpool to Franklin-Fels.

Join Bedford Audubon naturalist Tait Johansson for a walk through this lesser known 204-acre Bedford Audubon sanctuary. The preserve provides for easy walking with few steep inclines. Bring binoculars.

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.

Thursday, December 13, 9 a.m. (Carpool from Bylane Farm).

Expected return 3:30 p.m.

From November 23 through January 13, the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory of The 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 almost 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 descend on the popular Pasquale's Rigoletto Restaurant for lunch.

A \$10 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 separate. Registration is strictly required and limited to a maximum of 10.

**The Annual Christmas Bird Count
Saturday, December 15, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
(See separate article)**

**Bald Eagle Survey at George's Island Park, Montrose With Bedford Audubon Volunteers
Sunday, January 13, 3:30-5:00 p.m.**

For the second year, Bedford Audubon will participate in an Audubon NY-sponsored survey of roosting Bald Eagles on or near the Hudson River from December to March. Last year, a dedicated group of BAS volunteers collected valuable information on the number of wintering Bald Eagles in our area. Data were collected from three sites over a three-month period with two weekly observations at each location. This year, three weekly observations will be conducted. Please join the volunteers on Sunday, January 13 to learn more about Bald Eagles and their increasing presence in our area and see how the data is collected. No registration necessary.

(George's Island Park is located at 199 Dutch St, off Route 9A in Montrose)

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

Wednesday, January 16, 8:30 a.m.

Meet at Bylane Farm, 35 Todd Road, Katonah (carpool to Croton Point).

Bedford Audubon naturalist Tait Johansson will lead a walk at this stunning 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.

Nature Hike at Hunt Parker Sanctuary With Tait Johansson

Thursday February 7, 9-11 a.m.

Meet at Bylane Farm, 35 Todd Road, Katonah.

Join Bedford Audubon naturalist Tait Johansson for a walk through Bedford Audubon's Hunt-Parker sanctuary. Bring binoculars, and dress warmly! Come back to Bylane for hot chocolate.

The Great Hudson River Excursion With John Askildsen Sunday, February 10, 8:30 a.m. (Carpool from Bylane Farm) or meet at the Croton River landing, past the Croton train station at 9 a.m.

The Hudson River in winter attracts thousands of ducks, geese, and swans and a variety of birds of prey including Bald Eagles, Turkey and Black Vultures, hawks, and even ravens. Veteran BAS member, John Askildsen will guide us to several locations along the river for a leisurely and entertaining day of wildlife watching. Please bring lunch. Registration is required.

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

Sunday, March 9, 3:30-5:00 p.m.

Please join the BAS eagle survey volunteers on Sunday, March 9 to learn more about Bald Eagles and their increasing presence in our area, and see how the data is collected. We will also take a trip to nearby Black Rock Park, where an impressive number of duck species congregate in winter. No registration necessary. (Contact Joan Becker for directions).

Field Trip to Jones Beach With Joan and Richard Becker Saturday, March 15.

Expect to leave the greater Katonah area by 7:30 a.m. to meet Joan and Richard Becker at Jones Beach's Marina/Coast Guard Station at 8:30 a.m. Jones Beach is usually associated with leisurely summer days, but the deserted winter and early spring beach attracts an impressive number of birds. The shoreline will likely reveal many of the northern species of ducks and sandpipers, and wintering sparrows and finches. We also hope to see loons and grebes. Since Jones Beach is located on the Atlantic Flyway, we should see some early migrants. You may want to pack a morning snack plus lunch.

Nature Hike at Franklin-Fels Sanctuary With Tait Johansson Tuesday, March 18, 9-11 a.m. Meet at Bylane Farm, 35 Todd Road, Katonah. Carpool to Franklin-Fels.

Join Bedford Audubon naturalist Tait Johansson for a walk through this lesser known 204-acre Bedford Audubon sanctuary. The preserve provides for easy walking with few steep inclines. Bring binoculars.



PROGRAMS

*All programs are free and open to the public.
Katonah Village Library is wheel chair accessible.*

The Christmas Bird Count: From Historical Conservation to 21st Century Citizen Science With Geoffrey LeBaron,

**Christmas Bird Count Director,
National Audubon Society
Wednesday, December 12, 2007 at 7:30 p.m.**

Katonah Village Library, 26 Bedford Road, Katonah

Many birders have participated in a Christmas Bird Count (CBC), but few people realize the importance of their contribution to furthering our understanding of how bird populations are doing on a hemispheric level.

Since its inception on Christmas Day of 1900, Christmas Bird Census (now "Count") volunteers have been counting birds in specific areas during the holiday season. The CBC is the great-granddaddy of what has come to be called Citizen Science—where volunteer citizens partake in an activity and contribute data to a larger program. Scoffed at by many scientists for decades, in recent times the CBC and other large volunteer-generated data sets have become the wave of future data collection for conservation biologists.

Population declines and increases, changing wintering ranges and the patterns of irruptive species over the years can all be studied by using Christmas Bird Count data.

This program will look at the history of the CBC and, using the online CBC tool set, examine how some species of birds are doing on local, regional, and continental levels.



Geoffrey LeBaron is the Christmas Bird Count Director for the National Audubon Society, a position he has held since 1987. He is also involved in various other Audubon Science programs including the Great Backyard Bird Count, eBird, and the Important Bird Areas. He is a consultant for Audubon Productions and Audubon magazine, and has worked for the Audubon Society of New Hampshire and Rhode Island for many years in various capacities. In addition, Geoff has led natural history tours to Alaska, the Aleutian Islands, the Kamchatka Peninsula, Central and South America, the Galapagos Islands, Australia and Antarctica.

Native Ferns in Your Garden

With Dr. John T. Mickel, Senior Curator Emeritus

The New York Botanical Garden

Wednesday, January 9, 2008 at 7:30 p.m.

Katonah Village Library, 26 Bedford Road, Katonah



In his lecture Dr. Mickel will speak on the beauty of our native ferns and special aspects of their natural history, with comments on their ease of cultivation. Dr. Mickel has dedicated a large part of his career to the interpretation of ferns to the public.

Dr. John Mickel is an internationally recognized scientist, horticulturist, author and lecturer on ferns. He came to The New York Botanical Garden in 1969 as curator of ferns, working in the Institute of Systematic Botany, and he has worked for this renowned institution ever since. His scientific research concentrates on the ferns of Mexico, and his horticultural interests in-

clude the testing of hardy ferns from temperate parts of the world. His travels have taken him to Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, Australia, New Zealand, China, and Japan. Although trained as a fern scientist, John also has a strong interest in fern cultivation and has produced over 60 scientific articles and monographs and 10 books, among them *Ferns for American Gardens* (1994). He founded the New York Chapter of The American Fern Society and has established and developed fern gardens at the New York Botanical Garden and the Rockefeller State Park Preserve. He was also the consultant for fern gardens at Lyndhurst and Rocky Hills in Westchester County. John continues to introduce new ferns to the trade and has led tours to the tropics; his most recent tour to Oaxaca, Mexico was recorded in *Oaxaca Journal* (2002) by Oliver Sacks. John's book *Ferns for American Gardens* will be available for sale at the lecture. The book was judged by the American Horticultural Society as one of the best 75 horticultural books published to date.

Past, Present and Future at Ward Pound Ridge Reservation With Brenda Bates, Park Superintendent, and Michael Gambino, Trailside Nature Museum Curator
Wednesday, February 13, 2008 at 7:30 p.m.

Katonah Village Library, 26 Bedford Road, Katonah
Brenda Bates' and Michael Gambino's combined lecture and slide show will include an overview of the history of land use in the Ward Pound Ridge Reservation and the movement towards conservation and stewardship. It will also describe the museum's growth and expanded scope since its 1937 opening; its educational programs; biodiversity survey efforts; its interpretive exhibits and collection; how Trailside's new wigwam was built, and much more. Find out how the community can become involved in the exciting activities going on at the Reservation.



Brenda Freeman-Bates started her career with Westchester County in 1994 teaching the Children's Summer Ecology Program, and shortly thereafter she became the Assistant Curator, later Curator at Trailside Museum. She now holds the position of Park Superintendent.

Brenda's main expertise is environmental education and land stewardship. She previously served as Bedford Audubon Society's program coordinator for several years and is currently serving on the Pound Ridge Land Conservancy board. She was also the main WPRR contact and coordinator during Bedford Audubon's impressive Bio-Blitz in June 2007.

In July 2005, **Michael Gambino** became the seventh curator of the Trailside Nature Museum since its inception in 1937, having served there as a naturalist and later assistant curator since 2001. Michael began teaching classes in nature awareness and wilderness survival in 1995. His vision is to help people develop a relationship with nature that guides and feeds the soul and helps them to act with wisdom, balance, and compassion in their lives. He is also the editor/designer of the museum's *Friends of Trailside Newsletter*.

Why We Should Teach Evolution, Not Intelligent Design With Dr. Douglas J. Futuyma, Distinguished Professor of Ecology and Evolution at Stony Brook University
Wednesday, March 12, 2008 at 7:30 p.m.

Katonah Village Library, 26 Bedford Road, Katonah

Evolution is the central unifying principle of the biological sciences. It has been thoroughly documented by vast amounts of diverse evidence, and is one of the most important discoveries of science. It provides an explanation of a vast variety of biological phenomena, and is the foundation of many applications of biology to human health, welfare, and self-understanding. In contrast, "Intelligent Design," which is simply creationism* under another name, provides no insights and has no supporting evidence whatsoever. To include Intelligent Design in public school science curricula would not only violate the U. S. Constitution, but would also undermine science and rationalism, to the detriment of society.



Douglas J. Futuyma's research is motivated by an abiding interest in the evolutionary origins of biological diversity. He uses herbivorous insects (which account for more than a quarter of the known species of organisms) as vehicles for studying speciation, the evolution of ecological

specialization, and the evolution of interactions between species (viz., insects and their food plants). He is the author of numerous books, including the widely used college textbook *Evolutionary Biology* (3 editions), *Science on Trial: The Case for Evolution* (1982, 1995), and *Evolution* (2005), which concern the conflict between science and creationism, in addition to scores of scientific articles. Dr. Futuyma is the editor of *Annual Review of Ecology, Evolution and Systematics*, and he has been the editor of *Evolution* magazine, the leading international journal of evolutionary research. He is also past president of the Society for the Study of Evolution, and of the American Society of Naturalists, from which he received the Sewall Wright Award in 1997. He has often contributed to courses in tropical biology offered in Costa Rica by the Organization for Tropical Studies. His other major activities have been in the service of integrating and promoting the study of evolutionary biology. He is an avid naturalist.

"...the historical reality of evolution — is not a theory. It is a fact, as fully as the fact of the earth's revolution about the sun. Like the heliocentric solar system, evolution began as a hypothesis, and achieved 'facthood' as the evidence in its favor became so strong that no knowledgeable and unbiased person could deny its reality. No biologist today would think of submitting a paper entitled 'New evidence for evolution,' it simply has not been an issue for a century."

— Douglas J. Futuyma

*Creationism is a religious belief that humanity, life, the earth, and the universe were created in their original form by a deity or deities (often the Abrahamic God of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), whose existence is presupposed. (Wikipedia)

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