A Tribute to Peter Joost upon His Retirement

Nests in a New York City Classroom
This summer two things happened that inspired me to spend more time in nature with my children. While I always think of myself as someone who shares nature with my kids, the reality of life in the 21st Century often makes it challenging.

First, I got a new pair of binoculars. The pair of Leitz 10x42s are nearly 20 years old, and not in perfect condition, but they will be my constant companions when bird-watching. The pair were a gift from my childhood mentor, Pat Jacobson, and are inscribed with her name and driver’s license number. I first met Pat when my parents began taking classes with her: “Tidepools of California,” “Know Your Local Wildflowers,” “California Birds,” and many more. I was a regular tagalong on all the field trips; I was eight years old and fascinated by the natural world. Pat taught me how to identify birds and, along with my parents, opened my eyes to the world of nature. Pat, who is now 86, had planned on leaving me her binoculars in her will, but decided she would like to be able to see me using them. Holding them in my hands, I was brought back to my own childhood exploring the hills of Central California for birds, flowers, and mushrooms.

Second, Audubon and Toyota launched a campaign, “Exit the Highway,” that urges more people to get off the expressway and take time to explore both great and small natural places across our country. Inspired by both the campaign and my mentor’s gift, I’ve taken my children to explore bird sanctuaries and wildlife refuges from New York City to Maine and beyond: Scarborough Marsh in Maine, the Ossipee Pine Barrens in New Hampshire, and Cape Cod National Seashore in Massachusetts—all designated Important Bird Areas.

As the summer continued, my children’s complaints about bugs and heat declined, and the excitement of seeing something new and interesting grew. Even our small backyard in Brooklyn has become a place of natural adventures, searching for “roly-poly bugs,” discovering new beetles, and watching fledgling cardinals.

As the fall approaches, I look forward to continuing these explorations around New York City and beyond, and I hope you will join me. This issue of The Urban Audubon includes over 100 trips and classes, covering all five boroughs and the entire Atlantic Flyway down to South America. What better way to get outdoors than with the experts here at NYC Audubon.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUMMER STAFF AND INTERNS!

NYC Audubon’s conservation work is reinforced by our summer staff and interns. Read below about the work of this year’s summer team.

Elizabeth Craig, a PhD candidate at Cornell University, led the nesting waterbirds survey for the fifth consecutive year. Alex Domeyko, a post-baccalaureate student at Columbia University, assisted with analysis of shorebird monitoring data from 2009 to 2012. Donald Kass, Ann Seligman, and Jarad Astin, longtime volunteers, acted as site coordinators for horseshoe crab monitoring in Jamaica Bay. Jon Merwin, a student at Hunter College High School, assisted with field work in Jamaica Bay. David Perry, a graduate student at the Wallerstein Collaborative for Urban Environment Education at NYU, spearheaded our persistence study for Project Safe Flight and collected data for the Harbor Herons foraging study.

Philippe Pierre-Antoine, an undergraduate student at Columbia University, conducted observations on American oystercatchers as part of his undergraduate thesis project. Suzan Shahrestani, a biologist who recently relocated to the New York area, assisted with field work in Jamaica Bay. Hilary Standish, who recently graduated from Earlham College, led the development of the Be a Good Egg NJ/NY website, assisted with field work in Jamaica Bay and Staten Island, and helped with numerous office tasks. Emilio Tobon, a PhD student from Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, monitored American oystercatcher nests at Breezy Point, Jamaica Bay.
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During a week in late May, Gabriel Willow led two bird walks in Central Park for NYC Audubon and two in Bryant Park for the Bryant Park Corporation; narrated a sunset cruise that took NYC Audubon members to the East River heron islands; prepared to lead the second NYC Audubon trip to the Maine coast, “Puffins, Warblers, and Lobster Boats”; and still made time to be interviewed for The Urban Audubon.

Those who have participated in Gabriel’s walks and tours will not be surprised to learn that he describes himself more as a naturalist than as a birder and, even more, as an educator. His study of the natural world began when he was a small child in rural Tennessee, catching all the living creatures he could (lizards, frogs, a scorpion) and trying to find out their names. He became hooked on birds at age five, when he received a field guide to birds from his grandmother.

Later, after the family moved to Maine, Gabriel pursued every opportunity to educate himself about birds and the natural world in general. He plundered the library of a local college, took a course in carving bird decoys, and began studying art, the better to document the natural world. (He continues to draw and do watercolors). By the age of 17, he had attended a nature camp at Audubon’s Hog Island in Maine and another sponsored by Victor Emmanuel Nature Tours; received a National Science Foundation scholarship to study fieldwork methodology in Colorado; and given a presentation at the American Birding Association’s annual meeting.

Gabriel’s obvious enthusiasm for sharing his knowledge is linked to his belief that the best way to promote conservation is to get people excited about the natural world. With two colleagues he has formed The WildLab (http://www.thewildlab.org), a free mobile-phone application for use by citizen scientists in collecting data.

Although he has birded in Europe and the tropics and for three years lived in the Yucatan, Gabriel says that New York City, with its unparalleled mixture of urbanity and unexpected wildlife, is his favorite place to watch birds. He would like to hear comments about past walks and tours and ideas for future ones. Look for his signature newsboy’s cap when you’re out in Central Park or write to him at gwillow@nycaudubon.org. Better yet, join him on his walks. See Events & Adventures pages 8-12.

Trip Leader Profile: Gabriel Willow

Volunteer!

Work in our friendly office or in the field and make a difference for New York City’s wildlife. An orientation session for new volunteers will be held at 71 West 23rd Street on Monday, September 24, from 6:30-7:30pm. If interested in either our general orientation session or the volunteer events listed below, please contact John Rowden at volunteer@nycaudubon.org or 212-691-7483.

International Coastal Clean-Up
Saturday, September 15, 10am-2pm
With American Littoral Society and National Park Service
Join us at Brooklyn’s Plumb Beach as the summer winds down, and give back to the beaches and coastlines that give you so much enjoyment. As part of this international effort to improve coastline habitat, we will be picking up debris at Plumb Beach, an important site for shorebirds. Help us make a big impact on the beach and raise awareness of the importance of coastal areas to birdlife. Equipment, refreshments, and transportation from Manhattan provided.

Botanize the Bronx’s Van Cortlandt Park
Saturday, October 27, 9am-2pm
With New York City Department of Parks and Recreation and MillionTreesNYC
Meet at Van Cortlandt Park. Join NYC Audubon and our partners as we plant native trees in Van Cortlandt Park. This project is in support of a citywide effort to plant more native trees for the benefit of humans and wildlife. All supplies will be provided; just bring yourselves, your desire to help, and your energy.
The activity in New York City’s islands and woodlands has slowed down; it is the end of NYC Audubon’s spring/summer field season with non-stop action for our conservation team. According to the weather station in Central Park, New York City experienced the warmest February and the second-warmest March in history (http://www.climatestations.com/new-york-city/) and 15 days of rain in May.

WESTERN LONG ISLAND SOUND AND THE NARROWS: In April 2012 we launched a new project: Herring Gulls as Bio-indicators of the Health of New York Harbor Waters. Emilio Tobon has been leading the effort with help from office staff Tod Winston, Adriana Palmer, and Barbara Lysenko. Liz Craig led a crew of dedicated volunteers to conduct the 2012 Harbor Herons Nest Survey. She has reported a decline in the colony size on South Brother Island and an increase on Mill Rock.

JAMAICA BAY: Waterbird surveys in Jamaica Bay showed a shift in island use. Canarsie Pol used to be one of the most productive wading bird colonies in the bay. This year Board Member Don Riepe reported the island was nearly abandoned—even by gulls. Wading birds and cormorants are nesting on Elders Point Marsh East and Subway Island.

We were able to expand on our 2011 work with American oystercatchers thanks to Emilio Tobon and Columbia University student Philippe Pierre-Antoine. We monitored nest success and evaluated human disturbance. Shiloh Schulte from Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences helped us trap and band oystercatchers on Arverne Beach—the first such birds banded in New York State.

For the fourth year John Rowden led the team in collecting data on spawning horseshoe crabs at Plumb Beach and for the second year surveyed the additional sites of Dead Horse Bay and Big Egg. Volunteers Donald Kass, Ann Seligman, and Jarad Astin coordinated the data collection. Preliminary analysis indicates that spawning activity was lower this year than last. It looks likely that the warm winter/spring affected the timing of the crabs’ spawning; the crabs spawned earlier, affecting the numbers later in the season. We also collected data on shorebird numbers at several sites around Jamaica Bay, for the fourth year, including Plumb Beach, the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, and the Bay Dunes site in Far Rockaway. Shorebird numbers were down again this year, for the fourth year in a row.

STATEN ISLAND: This year we worked closely with SUNY Syracuse student Alison Kocek and her interns Kirsten Thoede and Kelly Long on saltmarsh sparrow breeding ecology. These data are part of a larger regional analysis of marsh-nesting birds. We began an Audubon in the Parks program, leading trips to Clay Pit Ponds State Park Preserve and Goethals Bridge Pond.

Working in partnership with NYC Parks and Recreation, we started a new project to evaluate habitat restoration for waterbirds on Prall’s Island in the Arthur Kill. This first year we surveyed for nests (finding none) and observed nearby waterbird foraging activity. PACE University graduate student Stephanie Fattizzi started an island predator study, using camera trapping technology.

IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS AND PROJECT SAFE FLIGHT: In May, Sara Pace received her M.S. from Columbia University for her work on city parks as habitat for breeding birds in New York City. Our work to make the city safer for migrating birds continues. Adriana Palmer has grown the volunteer monitoring team for fall migration and expanded the list of buildings participating in Lights Out New York. New York University M.S. student David Perry conducted a persistence and detectability study that will allow us to better calculate the number of bird collisions with windows.

We partnered this year with Alan Clark, Fordham University professor, and Andrew Farnsworth, Cornell University scientist and NYC Audubon board member, to examine bird migration over New York City more closely. We set up an avian radar unit on Governors Island and four rooftop microphones to capture images and sounds from land birds as they migrate through New York City. Earlham College graduate and summer intern Hilary Standish has been working diligently to analyze 120 files of vocalizations.

We are proud of all the work our conservation team accomplished this season and look forward to an equally productive spring/summer in 2013.
This small, colorful member of the wren family has an oversized song and attitude. Its loud, cheerful teakettle-teakettle-teakettle is almost a ‘given’ on any birdwalk and can sometimes be heard even in winter, when no other bird is singing. It also produces a buzzy, ‘scolding’ call which to me sounds a bit like an insect, and yet another burbling call reminiscent of a gray tree frog.

Prior to 1980, the Carolina wren (Thryothorus ludovicianus) was not common in New York City or in the Northeast and rarely encountered in city parks. Since then, it can be heard and (if you’re patient) seen in most natural areas throughout the City. The Carolina wren nests in dead trees and even in an open shed or garage shelf and feasts on spiders and insects found in tangles, ravines, and woodpiles. Unlike the house wren, the other common wren found in the Northeast, the Carolina wren doesn’t migrate, and its population may decline during hard, protracted winters. Its cinnamon-colored back and distinctive white eyebrow easily distinguish it from the house wren.

You can help Carolina wrens as well as woodpeckers, chickadees, nuthatches, and many other birds get through the winter by putting out a suet feeder, providing a brush pile that attracts spiders and insects, or offering a nest box as shelter from the elements. They will reward you with a burst of song come springtime.
Peter Joost developed an interest in the natural world at an early age: At eight he saw his first woodcock, as he wrote in *The Urban Audubon*: “In the company of my father I watched this potbellied, long-billed bird, surely the strangest to ever show up on our lawn… taking for every step forward, a half step back…. A timberdoodle, I was told, a name that seemed to fit.”

His move to New York in 1974 “coincided with my own burgeoning avi-mania.” Soon, he was an active member of the Brooklyn Bird Club (president at one time) and the Linnaean Society of New York (ditto), giving talks at the Museum of the City of New York, and leading birding walks throughout the five boroughs.

Starting in 1985, Peter taught classes in English, Latin, history, and nature at St. Bernard’s School. When the bell rang at day’s end, he led members of the environment club on hikes in the park, directed the annual Shakespeare play (boys played all the parts, and he got them to love it), oversaw the literary magazine (called *The Budget*), and tutored boys who needed extra help. “He was the school’s conscience,” said Stuart Johnson, headmaster, after Peter’s retirement this spring. “He made us all aware of the environment and the natural world.”

Twenty years ago, he joined NYC Audubon, and became an invaluable member of the conservation committee and of the board. We eagerly read his contributions to *The Urban Audubon*, which are always insightful, thorough, and peppered with wit. (As editor, Marcia Fowle typically had to call him as deadline came and went: “Bug me, please!” he’d say.)

The bugging was worth it. He detailed the lives of naturalist painters Mark Catesby (the first artist to take into account birds’ relationships with plants, often with a naïve charm “such as his flamingo placed in front of an enormous coral branch”); Alexander Wilson (“acquaintance of Thomas Jefferson, Meriwether Lewis—Wilson was allowed to paint some of the birds discovered on Lewis’s great trip west”), and Louis Agassiz (who “to the distress of his wife…set up the bridal suite as a lab to skin and prepare specimens.”)

Peter’s profiles of birds are ardent and based on years in the field: The northern gannet, one of his “dream birds,” dives “making an entry that would earn a perfect score.” Sparrows get “little respect,” even from God and birders who consign them “to the LBJ category—little brown jobs not worth worrying about.” In Peter’s spotlight, the lowliest of creatures morph into solid lead characters, “come to center stage with admirable timing—just a little later than most other fall migrations.”

After retiring from St. Bernard’s, Peter will be spending more time at El Refugio de Intag, in Ecuador. His love of birds brought him here, too. “I first came to Ecuador in 1987, leading a student group and was enchanted by the country,” he writes. “On a later birding trip, I met a couple who were just opening their cloud forest farm to birders. …later I bought some property nearby. Now I am hoping that birders (and others) will come visit me as well.” We will. Here’s the website: [www.elrefugiocloudforest.com](http://www.elrefugiocloudforest.com). See trip to Ecuador listed on page 10.
NYC Audubon Events

- **VAN CORTLANDT BIRD WALKS**
  Saturdays, September 24 - November 17
  Meet at Van Cortlandt Nature Center. Roger Peterson and Allan D. Cruickshank learned their craft on Van Cortlandt Park’s grounds, and these walks celebrate tradition as we look for resident and migrant species. For more information, please call 718-548-0912. No registration necessary. No limit. Free.

- **BIRDING FOR FAMILIES**
  Sundays, September 24 - November 25, 10-11am
  Guides: NYC Audubon Offered by the Central Park Conservancy
  Meet at the Dana Discovery Center (inside the Park at 110th Street between Lenox and Fifth Avenues). Bring the kids and visit one of New York City’s richest bird habitats. Learn how to identify our feathered neighbors in their natural surroundings. Binoculars can be borrowed from the Visitor Center. For weather cancellation information, call 212-860-1370. Limited to 20. Age 5 and up. Free.

- **FALL WARBLERS**
  Wednesday, September 5, 6:30-8:30pm (class); Sunday, September 9, 8-11am (trip)
  Instructor: Joe Giunta, Happy Warblers LLC
  Identifying “confusing fall warblers” can be tricky, even for the experts. Come study some of the most puzzling species that stop through our area during fall migration with expert Joe Giunta, and then enjoy a second session in the “classroom” of Central Park. Limited to 12. $45.

- **JAMAICA BAY SUNSET CRUISE**
  Saturdays, September 8, 4-7pm and October 13, 3-6pm
  Guides: Don Riepe, Mickey Cohen
  With American Littoral Society
  Meet at Pier 2 in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn. Enjoy a 3-hour cruise aboard the “Golden Sunshine.” Visit backwater marshes and learn about the wildlife of the bay. See nesting peregrine falcons, osprey, egrets, shorebirds, and more. Includes refreshments. To register, contact Don Riepe at 718-318-9344 or donriepe@gmail.com. Limited to 140. $45.

- **FALL BIRDING AT WAVE HILL, THE BRONX**
  Sundays, September 9, October 14, November 11, 9:30-11:30am
  Guides: Gabriel Willow
  With Wave Hill
  Meet at the Perkins Visitor Center. Wave Hill’s garden setting overlooking the Hudson River flyway provides the perfect habitat for resident and migrating birds. Ages 10 and up welcome with an adult. Reservations recommended, online at www.wavehill.org by calling 718-549-3200 x305, or at the Perkins Visitor Center. Severe weather cancels; for updates call 718-549-3200 x245 by 8am the day of the walk. NYC Audubon members enjoy two-for-one registration. Free for members and the plant life that supports them. Limited to 20. $35 for adults, $25 for ages 18 and under.

- **PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB WORKSHOP: FALL MIGRATION IN CENTRAL PARK**
  Tuesdays: September 18, 25; October 2, 9, 16; 5:30pm
  Guide: Gabriel Willow
  Meet at Central Park West and 72nd Street. Witness the spectacle of autumn migration as songbirds follow the Atlantic flyway to their tropical wintering grounds. Look for tanagers, warblers, and other neo-tropical migrants in the wilds of Central Park. Limited to 15. $95.

- **MEMBERS-ONLY**
  **PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP: FALL MIGRATION IN CENTRAL PARK**
  Saturday, September 22, 8-10:30am
  Instructor: David Speiser
  Meet at Belvedere Castle. Join David Speiser in Central Park to look for migrating warblers, vireos, and thrushes, as well as year-round residents. We will focus on camera basics, exposure, composition, and technique. Recommended equipment: DSLR, 300mm+ lens, and flash if you have one. Limited to 10. $60

- **PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP: FALL MIGRATION IN CENTRAL PARK**
  Saturday, September 29, 8-10:30am
  Instructor: David Speiser
  Meet at Belvedere Castle. Join David Speiser in Central Park to look for migrating warblers, vireos, and thrushes, as well as year-round residents. We will focus on camera basics, exposure, composition, and technique. Recommended equipment: DSLR, 300mm+ lens, and flash if you have one. Limited to 10. $60

NYC Audubon Events

- **EXPLORE THE BRONX RIVER BY ROWBOAT**
  Saturday, September 22, 12-2pm
  Guide: Chrissy Word
  With Rocking the Boat
  Launch from Hunts Point Riverside Park and explore the Bronx River aboard a hand-built wooden boat. The Bronx River is the city’s only true river and hosts an abundance of wildlife, including herons and egrets, osprey, and belted kingfishers. Visit restoration sites and learn about the Bronx River eco-system. Rowing optional. Limited to 20. $35 for adults, $25 for ages 18 and under.

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Hooded Mergansers
● **HOOK MOUNTAIN HAWK WATCH**, **NY**
  Sunday, September 23, 9am-4pm  
  Guide: Joe Giunta, Happy Warblers LLC
  Hook Mountain has commanding views of nearby mountain ridges and fantastic views of the Hudson River. We expect to see broad-winged and red-shouldered hawks, bald eagles, accipiters, falcons, and more. Bring a bag lunch to enjoy while sitting atop the mountain. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 12. $70

● **FALL MIGRANTS OF WOOD-LAWN CEMETERY, THE BRONX**
  Sunday, September 23, 8-9:30am  
  Guides: Tod Winston, Joseph McManus
  With Friends of Woodlawn Cemetery  
  Meet at the Jerome Avenue Entrance of Woodlawn Cemetery. Join us for a morning birdwalk on the lovely wooded grounds of Woodlawn Cemetery. We’ll look for fall migrants and year-round residents on the cemetery grounds—which are home to one of the largest collection of trees in an urban setting in the U.S. Limited to 15. $20

● **BIRDING TOURS OF BRYANT PARK, MANHATTAN**
  Thursdays, September 27-October 25, 8-9am  
  Guide: Gabriel Willow  
  With Bryant Park Corporation
  Meet at the Birding Tour Sign at the 42nd Street & 6th Avenue entrance to the park. Discover the surprising variety of birds that stop in Bryant Park during migration. No registration necessary. No Limit. Free

● **FESTIVAL OF LITTLE NECK BAY, QUEENS**
  Saturday, September 29, 11am-3pm  
  With Bayside Historical Society, Bayside Marina, Queens  
  Community Board 11, NYC Department of Parks & Recreation, Queens Botanical Garden, St. John’s University Environmental Studies Program
  Meet at Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Boulevard, Douglaston, NY. Come celebrate National Estuaries Day at Little Neck Bay. Festival activities will include canoeing, boat rides, NYC Audubon-led nature walks, games, music, and more. For more information, please call 718-229-4000. No Limit. Free

● **BIRDS AND PLANTS: THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN IN AUTUMN, THE BRONX**
  Saturday, October 6, 10am-1pm  
  Guides: Gabriel Willow, NYBG Docent
  With The New York Botanical Garden
  Enter through the Moshulu gate and meet at the Moshulu ticketing booths. The NY Botanical Garden is home to a large tract of East Coast old-growth forest. Come enjoy the woods and gardens in autumn, and learn about the fall migrants that use this rich habitat to fuel their journey south. Limited to 15. $30

● **RAPTORS OF JAMAICA BAY, THE BRONX**
  Monday, October 8, 9am-4pm  
  Guide: Gabriel Willow  
  With Wave Hill
  documentary films, presentations, on-site birding, and a guided field trip. Open to the public. No Limit. Free

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Peter Mott will take us to some of the best spots in the vicinity of Jones Beach, to find what surprises the north winds have brought us. Bring lunch. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 12. $40

● **PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB**
  Wednesday, October 3, 6:30-8:30pm
  See the September 12 listing for details.

● **PHOTOGRAPHY CLASSES: ADOBE LIGHTROOM AND PHOTOSHOP**
  Thursdays, October 4 and 18, November 1; 6:30-8pm
  Instructors: David Speiser, Lloyd Spitalnik
  Join professional photographers Lloyd Spitalnik and David Speiser for this series of three classroom workshops focusing on image post-processing, for all skill levels from beginner to advanced. The classes progress from the basics of Adobe Lightroom and managing your raw photos... to processing your images with Adobe Photoshop... to the programs’ more advanced features. Take advantage of this small-group setting to answer all your questions. Limited to 12. $200 for the package of 3 workshops; $85 per workshop

● **MEMBERS-ONLY**
  October Member Walk in Central Park  
  Friday, October 5, 7:30-9am  
  Meet at Central Park West and 106th Street, parkside. Experience fall migration with NYC Audubon Board President Harry Maas as he leads you through Central Park’s picturesque North Woods. Limited to 20. Free for contributing NYC Audubon members at the Student/Senior level and up. Please call Adriana Palmer at 212-691-7483 to register.

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Instructor: Alan Messer
Learn the basics for drawing birds, plants, and landscapes. Alan is a well-known wildlife artist and illustrator whose work appears in magazines, books, and field guides. Includes a class session and two field trips to Central Park or another site, depending on class interest. Drawing materials and supplies provided. Limited to 10. $125

● **WAVE HILL RAPTOR DAY, THE BRONX**
  Monday, October 8, 9am-4pm
  Guide: Gabriel Willow  
  With Wave Hill
  …continued on page 11
NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL TRIPS

CAPE MAY WEEKEND, NJ
Saturday, September 29-Sunday, September 30 or Saturday, October 13-Sunday, October 14
Guide: Joe Giunta, Happy Warblers LLC.
Cape May, New Jersey, is one of the best birding venues in the United States, especially during fall migration. Visit the Cape May Hawk Watch on two days, once late in the day and then early to get a good variety of hawks. Also visit birding hotspots such as Higbee Beach, Cape May Point, Jake’s Landing, Cape May Meadows, and Nummy Island. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 10. $300 (single room supplement $50)

ASSATEAGUE ISLAND NATIONAL SEA SHORE / CHINCOTEAGUE WILDLIFE REFUGE WEEKEND
Thursday, November 1, 9am - Sunday, November 4, 6pm
Guide: Don Riepe
With American Littoral Society
A great wildlife weekend along the Virginia Coast. Includes three nights at the Refuge Inn, guided hikes, a bus tour of backwater flats, plus an “all-you-can-eat” seafood buffet. See wild ponies, sika deer, bald eagles, and many other species of wildlife. To register, contact Don Riepe at 718-318-9344 or donriepe@gmail.com. Limited to 30. $385 (single room supplement $150)

MONTAUK WINTER WEEKEND: SEALS, SEA BIRDS AND SANDY BEACHES, LONG ISLAND, NY
Friday, January 4, 3pm - Sunday, January 6, 4pm
Guides: Mike Bottini, Mickey Cohen, Don Riepe
With American Littoral Society
Visit the vast dunes, beaches and woods at Montauk during peak sea bird season and hike the beautiful “Walking Dunes,” Hither Woods, Oyster Pond and the “Seal Haul-out” site. Includes double-occupancy lodging at the luxurious Manor House, most meals, guided hikes, evening programs, a star watch, and free pickup at the LIRR station in Montauk. To register, contact Don Riepe at 718-318-9344 or donriepe@gmail.com. Limited to 60. $375 ($120 single supplement)

BIRDING THE ANDEAN SLOPES: NORTHWEST ECUADOR
Saturday, January 12-Monday, January 21
Guides: John Rowden, Edwin Perez
Join us for a trip to one of South America’s most celebrated (and spectacularly scenic) areas for birding, led by one of Ecuador’s finest bird guides. Starting from Quito, the trip will cover east and west slope Andean birds, from paramo to foothills. Target species include the coveted Andean cock-of-the-rock, long-wattled umbrellabird, Andean condor, sword-billed hummingbird, as well as fascinating manakins, colorful tanagers, and many rarities. Please visit our website or contact Tod Winston at twinston@nycaudubon.org to learn more. Limited to 12. Price TBA

COSTA RICA: VOLCANIC HIGHLANDS AND GULF OF NICOYA
Saturday, February 23-Saturday, March 2
Workshops: Tuesdays, February 5 and 12, 6:30-8:30pm
Guides: Glenn Phillips, Richard Garrigues
Join Executive Director Glenn Phillips and Richard Garrigues, author of Birds of Costa Rica, for a tour of some of Costa Rica’s most beautiful and fascinating landscapes, home to a dizzying array of tropical birds including over two dozen hummingbird species. We’ll stay in a lovely cloud forest lodge as we visit haunting Poás volcano; pass through warm Caribbean lowlands on our way to the impressive, conical peak of Arenal volcano; and then descend through tropical dry forest to reach the spectacular gulf of Nicoya. Target species include fiery-throated hummingbird, Montezuma’s oropendola, lovely cotinga, roseate spoonbill, and much more. Includes two pre-trip workshops, lodging, local transportation, most meals, and all park fees. Please visit our website or contact Tod Winston at twinston@nycaudubon.org to learn more. Limited to 12. $1,995 ($300 single room supplement)

TEXAS COAST AND HILL COUNTRY
Saturday, April 6-Sunday, April 14
Guides: Don Riepe, Carol Borneman
Fly to Houston and start with a visit to the High Island and Galveston areas during peak spring bird migration. Other highlights: the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge, an Austin boat tour to watch thousands of bats emerge at dusk, and a visit to Texas Hill Country to look for the endangered golden-cheeked warbler and black-capped vireo. Includes roundtrip flight, local transportation, lodging, some meals, and park fees. Limited to 14. $1,950 (price is subject to change)

StarrTrips
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday mornings in Central Park.
Monday, August 20–Wednesday, October 31
Mondays and Wednesdays: Meet at 7:30am sharp at 81st & Central Park West (SE corner)
Tuesdays: Meet at 9am sharp at 103rd & Central Park West (parkside)
Saturdays: Meet at 7:30am sharp at 103rd & Central Park West (parkside)
Join Starr Saphir for bird-watching in Central Park. All Starr Trips are non-smoking. No registration necessary. For more information, call Starr at 917-306-3808. $8 ($4 for full-time students)

Remember NYC Audubon
A bequest is a thoughtful and straightforward way to protect birds and bird habitat in the five boroughs. It can be expressed “I bequeath [a sum of money or a percentage of my estate] to New York City Audubon Society, Inc. a not-for-profit organization with offices at 71 West 23rd Street, Suite 1523, New York, NY 10010, for its general purposes.” Consult your attorney and give Executive Director Glenn Phillips a call at 212-691-7483.
EVENTS AND ADVENTURES (CONTINUED)

Wave Hill takes flight as we celebrate birds of prey. This day-long event features live raptor shows, bird walks, discovery tables, owl pellet dissections and more. Overlooking the Hudson River, Wave Hill is the perfect place to spot hawks, eagles, ospreys, and falcons. See the full schedule of events at www.wavemall.org. No limit. NYC Audubon members enjoy two-for-one admission.

- **SPARROW ID WORKSHOP**
  Thursday, October 11, 6:30-8pm (class); Sunday, October 14, 2-5pm (trip)
  Instructor: Gabriel Willow
  Sparrows are one of the most challenging groups of birds to identify, yet fascinating once they can be distinguished. Learn to identify those LBJs (little brown jobs) by learning behavior, field marks, and songs. Sparrow species seen in prior years include field, swamp, savannah, white-crowned, and Lincoln’s. Limited to 12. $45

- **FALL MIGRATION ON RANDALL’S ISLAND**
  Saturday, October 13, 9am-noon
  Guides: Gabriel Willow, Victoria Ruzicka
  With Randall’s Island Park Alliance, Inc.
  Meet on the NW corner of 102nd Street and the FDR Drive. We’ll walk across the foot bridge to Randall’s Island, an under-explored location in the East River that hosts restored freshwater wetlands and saltmarsh. We’ll look for fall migrants as we explore the results of recent restoration efforts. Limited to 20. $25

- **NYC AUDUBON DAY AT HAWK MOUNTAIN, PA**
  Saturday, October 20, 8am-6pm
  Guides: Jeremy Scheievert, Gabriel Willow, NYC Audubon staff
  With Hawk Mountain Sanctuary
  Come to Hawk Mountain with NYC Audubon! Hawk Mountain’s Jeremy Scheievert will introduce us to the great variety of raptors that may be seen, including golden eagles, buteos, and falcons—and Gabriel Willow and NYC Audubon staff will be on hand to help with bird ID. Bring lunch. Group program, trail admission, and transport by coach included (but participants may also arrange their own transportation). Limited to 30. $85

- **HIKE TO MOSES MOUNTAIN, STATEN ISLAND**
  Sunday, October 21, 9:15am-4pm
  (Extreme inclement weather date: Sunday, October 28)
  Guide: Gabriel Willow
  With NYC Parks and the Greenbelt Conservancy
  Meet at the Manhattan terminal of the S.I. Ferry. Journey to Moses Mountain, which provides a panoramic view of Staten Island and points beyond. We’ll look for migrating hawks, warblers, and other songbirds with crimson sumac and other autumn foliage as a backdrop. Bring lunch. Transportation on Staten Island provided. Limited to 18. $30

- **PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP: WATERFOWL IN AUTUMN, LI**
  Sunday, October 27, 7-10am
  Instructor: David Speiser
  Meet at Mill Pond in Bellmore, Long Island. Join professional photographer David Speiser as we search for gadwalls, pied-billed grebes, teal, shoveler ducks, and more against the beautiful red and yellow reflections of fall foliage on the water. If time permits we may also look for raptors at Jones Beach. Recommended equipment: DSLR, 300mm+ lens. Limited to 8. $70

- **RAPTOR TRUST AND GREAT SWAMP, NJ**
  Saturday, October 27, 9:30am-6pm
  Guides: Don Riepe, Tod Winston
  Enjoy a private tour of the Raptor Trust rehabilitation center and see many owls and hawks up close. Afterward, we’ll hike the boardwalk trails of the beautiful Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge to look for raptors, waterfowl, reptiles, and amphibians. Bring lunch. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 11. $75

- **BEGINNING BIRDING**
  Tuesdays, October 30 and November 6, 6:30-8pm (classes); and Saturdays, November 3 and 10 (trips)
  Instructor: Tod Winston and guest guide Don Riepe
  Even if you’ve never picked up a pair of binoculars, you’ll soon be identifying warblers, sparrows, waterfowl, and more—both by sight and by ear. Classes adaptive to the needs and interests of students. Field trips to Central Park and Jamaica Bay (transport to Jamaica Bay included). Limited to 12. $85

- **MEMBERS-ONLY**
  November Member Walk in Prospect Park
  Thursday, November 1, 7:30-9am
  Meet at the entrance to Prospect Park across from 98th Street and the FDR Drive. Journey to Prospect Park, looking for wintering ducks, geese, and geese. Bring lunch. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 12. $20

- **PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB**
  Wednesday, November 7, 6:30-8:30pm
  See the September 12 listing for details.

- **SNOW GEESE AND TUNDRA SWANS OF BRIGANTINE, NJ**
  Sunday, November 11, 9:30am-7pm
  Guide: Joe Giunta, Happy Warblers LLC
  Brigantine, part of the National Wildlife Refuge System, is one of the east coast’s premier sites for waterbirds, offering a diversity of species and panoramic views. Bring lunch. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 12. $85

- **VAN TRIP TO THE WINTER WATERFOWL WORKSHOP AT JAMAICA BAY**
  Saturday, November 17, 9am-3pm
  Register for our van trip to the Winter Waterfowl Workshop, and get to Jamaica Bay the easy way! Transport by passenger van. Bring lunch. Limited to 12. $20

- **WINTER WATERFOWL WORKSHOP**
  Saturday, November 17, 10am-1pm
  Guides: Don Riepe, Tod Winston
  With Gateway National Recreation Area
  Meet at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center for a slide ID program and walk to look for wintering waterfowl. Learn about their behavior and biology and how to identify them in the field. To register, contact Don Riepe at 718-318-9344 or donriepe@gmail.com. Limited to 25. Free

- **DUCKS, RAPTORS, AND MORE AT PELHAM BAY PARK, THE BRONX**
  Saturday, December 1, 9am-3pm
  Guide: Gabriel Willow
  Come explore the lovely coves and rocky outcroppings of Pelham Bay Park, looking for wintering ducks,

…continued on page 12
"Trick question: Where do birds live?" These junior ornithologists were not stumped. Hands rose, and the girl I called on gave the correct answer, "They live in their habitat." Next question. "So what about nests?" Another correct answer. "That's where they lay their eggs and raise their babies."

The setting was a classroom in Central Park East II, a public school in East Harlem. The school had enrolled two third-grade classes in Audubon New York's *For the Birds!*, an elementary school education program initiated in 1997 by NYC Audubon in collaboration with National Audubon and AmeriCorps. Soon thereafter, Audubon New York, the Audubon state office, took on managing the program in New York City, drawing on volunteers to teach the program. Since its inception, over 11,000 students in Queens, Bronx, Staten Island, and Manhattan schools have participated.

Central Park East II selected the 8-session program, and Anne Manice, Audubon New York board member, and I, former NYC Audubon board member, were the instructors. Before spring migration began, we talked about habitat and nests.

As an eastern bluebird trail monitor for Audubon Sharon, CT, I am permitted to collect vacated nests from boxes on a route in nearby Cornwall and use them in the classroom. Although not endangered, eastern bluebirds face tough competition for the boxes designed for them. Tree swallows, house wrens, and house sparrows are also cavity-nesters and compete for bluebird boxes given any opportunity.

Eastern bluebirds and tree swallows use similar materials to build their nests, drawn from the habitat they share—pine needles and dry grass. Tree swallows add feathers. I supplied a tree swallow nest that the students used as a model to make their own creations. Starting with 4" diameter raffia wreaths, they wove yarn and pipe cleaners criss-crossing the bottom to make a base. They added dried leaves from Central Park trees, Spanish moss, and lint from my clothes dryer. Tucked in on top were a few feathers to cover the bowl, and finally a clutch of three white cotton ball eggs was added.

These third graders could not get over the fact that birds use their beaks to build their nests and that as many as 2,000 pine needles are woven into one eastern bluebird nest. They discovered that house wrens carry as many as 400 twigs to build a nest and were amazed that some birds use dog fur as nesting material. Proud as they were of their nest creations, it was the classroom discussions that piqued their interest in birds and their habitat.

Central Park East II Students Show Off Their Nest-making Skills

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NYC Audubon is pleased to introduce five new board members.

CLIFFORD CASE is a co-director of Carter Ledyard & Milburn LLP’s Environmental Practice Group. He provides corporate, real estate, and financing advice to for-profit and non-profit clients. Cliff’s environmental practice encompasses litigation and regulation, as well as the due diligence aspects of corporate and real estate transactions. As a board member he hopes to contribute to strengthening NYC Audubon’s programs and governance. He is impressed by the chapter’s innovative programs, like Lights Out New York and outreach to New York City youth to help interest and train the next generation of conservationists. He is a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School.

JUDY CRAIG is the co-founder (with her husband John) of Eliminate Poverty Now, a non-profit that promotes economic opportunity and education in sub-Saharan Africa. She currently serves on the boards of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Ralston Historical Association, and the Cystic Fibrosis Care Fund. She’s also the proud mother of Liz Craig of NYC Audubon’s Harbor Heron Project, who encouraged Judy to get involved with Audubon. As a new NYC Audubon board member, Judy says she will at first be “listening and learning.” And she hopes to bring her skills in finance and administration to the chapter. She holds an MBA from Harvard.

SARAH JEFFORDS, native New Yorker, has been a practicing attorney for more than 25 years in the public sector. She has been involved with National Audubon for 25 years and has been a board member of Audubon New York for six years. “I have always been a big fan of NYC Audubon,” she says. “As an organization it offers so much outreach to the general public. There are always opportunities for interested people to learn about birding through classes, workshops, and field trips. It’s also an approachable and friendly organization. I am very happy to be part of it.”

LAUREN PERA KLINGSBERG has put years of publishing experience to work for NYC Audubon, where she has been the co-editor of The Urban Audubon since 1998. “It has been amazing to see how the organization has changed and grown over the years. I would like to see our communications to and from our membership and the wider New York City community continue to evolve and enhance the ability of NYC Audubon to pursue its objectives,” she says. For five years, Lauren was the managing editor of The World Policy Journal, published by the New School for Social Research. In addition, she previously worked at Praeger Publishers and Greenwood Publishing Group.

TOM STEPHENSON is a naturalist, writer, and photographer. So joining the NYC Audubon board is a natural fit. “I’ve always valued the Audubon mission,” he says. “And I’ve been a member for many years, once serving on the board of another chapter. NYC Audubon plays an important role in conservation in the city and has spearheaded many important initiatives, such as Project Safe Flight.” Tom has written many articles for magazines including Birding and Bird Watcher’s Digest and has a featured column on Surfbirds.com. He has also donated over 200 recordings to Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s Macaulay Library including rare species from the Eastern Himalayas and Southeast Asia.
National Audubon Strategic Plan 2012
How Does it Affect New York City?

In spring 2012, the National Audubon Society published a strategic plan that details its vision for advancing conservation throughout the Western Hemisphere, by leveraging its network of local chapters, nature centers, state offices, and international affiliates. Five key conservation strategies drive National Audubon’s plan: sharing our seas and shores; saving Important Bird Areas; shaping a healthy climate and clean energy future; putting working lands to work for birds and people; and creating bird-friendly communities. These conservation strategies are in turn framed through the lens of four vital migration routes—the Pacific, Central, Mississippi, and Atlantic flyways.

Located at a critical juncture along the Atlantic flyway, New York City will play an important role in achieving National Audubon’s hemispheric conservation goals. Luckily for the birds, the National plan reinforces with many of NYC Audubon’s existing conservation projects and priorities.

Under the heading of “sharing our seas and shores,” National Audubon seeks to promote coastal stewardship of Atlantic beaches and saltmarshes in order to maintain habitat and protect breeding and migration sites. NYC Audubon is already engaged in this important effort, protecting and restoring crucial shoreline habitat at Jamaica Bay and on Staten Island.

In terms of “saving Important Bird Areas,” National Audubon focuses on restoring Long Island Sound. NYC Audubon recently identified the urbanized, westernmost portion of the Sound as a priority area for its own work to mitigate the effects of habitat loss and nitrogen pollution.

National strategies and local action are most closely aligned under the goal of “creating bird-friendly communities.” NYC Audubon has already invested heavily in nurturing Important Bird Areas, restoring critical habitat, and engaging citizen scientists, all of which are priorities outlined in the National Audubon plan. National Audubon is also promoting public engagement through programs such as Lights Out—a project in which New York City Audubon has achieved great success—and the TogetherGreen volunteer initiative, which has driven many of New York City Audubon’s restoration and monitoring efforts over the last four years. Finally, National Audubon seeks to mobilize local chapters to engage a broad audience, a goal that NYC Audubon is working to achieve through an expanded array of educational programs for New Yorkers of all ages, across all five boroughs.

Book Review

With trends such as eating a diet of whole foods and teaching a curriculum of whole language, it’s no surprise that we now have the concept of “whole birding.”

As with any avid birder, Derek Lovitch’s goal in How to Be a Better Birder is to show dedicated birders how to see and identify as many birds as possible. He takes into consideration not just a bird’s appearance, but its movement, its behavior, its location and surroundings, sometimes even what the weather has been or is going to be. And he’s always aware of the geography of the area. He calls his method holistic or the “whole bird and more.” His love of birds and admiration for other avid birders is evident in his breezy, conversational tone as he explains his method.

This is not a book for the casual birder, though it has good advice for all birders. It lists, reviews, and recommends scores of other books and websites, and not just those that are strictly about birds. Lovitch suggests books on botany, since identifying trees, shrubs, and wildflowers can help identify the birds in or near them. He explains the importance of geography for birders; for instance, why peninsulas are such great birding spots. (Read the book and look at its maps to see why.) Also he encourages the reader to become familiar with meteorology and literate in reading weather maps.

For an aspiring birder, this book is a delight. Lovitch’s passion for birding jumps off the pages, and the pages themselves are lovely. The book is a paperback, but it’s sturdy with smooth pages and lovely photographs and maps. The text is relentless yet inspirational in its quest for bettering the ability of birders.

Lovitch will be discussing his book on Wednesday, October 17. See 2012-2013 Lecture Series on page 6.
News & Notes

REDUCING SEWER OVERFLOWS IN FLUSHING BAY
With support from the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, NYC Audubon will be creating a bird-friendly storm water park in a traffic island located in the Elmhurst neighborhood of Queens. The project, which will seek to capture storm water before it enters the sewer system, will also study how well native plants attract insect prey for birds in an urban setting. Construction is expected to start in September, and monitoring of the site will continue for three years.

JOINING FORCES FOR JAMAICA BAY'S FUTURE
In July, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar signed an agreement between the National Park Service and the City of New York Department of Parks & Recreation to manage cooperatively 10,000 acres of federal and city-owned parks in and around Jamaica Bay. The agreement aims to promote visitation, education programs, scientific research, and recreational opportunities in the bay and includes plans for both a new nonprofit fundraising entity as well as a new science and resilience center to lead future urban ecosystem research.

AL CACCESE TO LEAVE AUDUBON NEW YORK
Albert (“Al”) Caccese, Executive Director of Audubon New York, has announced that he will step down from that position in January 2013. Al took the helm of Audubon New York in 2003, and during his tenure has demonstrated great vision and uncommon leadership skills. We wish Al well in his future endeavors.

Acknowledgments
NYC Audubon’s conservation work and education programs are made possible by the generous contributions from members and friends. We’d like to express our gratitude for the leadership support of the Leon Levy Foundation and to all those who have supported us in our work over the past year.

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Fall 2012
Join NYC Audubon to celebrate more than 30 years of successful conservation work at the eighth annual Fall Roost. This year NYC Audubon will honor three New Yorkers for their outstanding contributions on behalf of the City’s birds: Ajamu Brown, Helena Durst, and Christopher Ward.

Ajamu Brown is a TogetherGreen fellow from Brooklyn’s Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood, where he created an online, interactive green map and community toolkit. The Bed-Stuy Community Eco-Mapping Project is designed to assist local residents in discovering their own community’s green assets, and to cultivate new leaders on environmental sustainability issues in Central Brooklyn. Helena Durst, vice president at the Durst Organization, has been our partner for a number of Project Safe Flight initiatives, including Lights Out NY and bird-friendly buildings. She is currently assisting us with our effort to map how migrant songbirds use New York City, by allowing us to place microphones on the rooftops of four Durst Organization buildings in midtown. Christopher Ward is currently executive vice president for major projects at Dragados USA, a construction firm. A former NYC Audubon board member, he has served as the head of the Port Authority of NY and NJ, and as the DEP commissioner. In both roles he has pioneered sustainability initiatives that will impact each organization well into the future.

Proceeds from the Fall Roost support NYC Audubon’s work in environmental education, conservation, and advocacy. The evening will begin with a cocktail reception and silent auction, followed by a seated dinner. Tickets start at $350. For tickets and more information, please contact Aileen Ruddy at 212-787-9423 or aruddy@nycaudubon.org.