



THE URBAN AUDUBON

NEW YORK CITY AUDUBON CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF CONSERVATION

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NYC AUDUBON NEWSLETTER

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5 CALCULATING YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

6-8 EVENTS AND ADVENTURES

9 BIRD/WINDOW COLLISIONS

APRIL MEMBER WALK "WOODCOCKTAILS" AT JAMAICA BAY TUESDAY, APRIL 12, 3-8PM GUIDE: PETER MOTT

After a leisurely check of Jamaica Bay National Wildlife Refuge's West Pond and gardens, we will adjourn to the woodcock courting grounds and sip cocktails while looking for male woodcocks executing dramatic flight displays. In limited light, we hope to see them in the air and, perhaps, on the ground approaching waiting females. Includes transport by passenger van and refreshments. This Contributing Members-only event is \$20 for NYC Audubon members at the Student/Senior level and above. To register, visit Trips & Classes at www.nycaudubon.org or call 212-691-7483.

PIPING PLOVERS IN PERIL

Don Riepe

More often heard than seen, the piping plover is a small, sand-colored shorebird that nests on open beaches. In the last half of the last century humans developed and altered beachfront habitats. As a result, plover populations drastically declined. In 1986, at the urging of Audubon and other groups, the federal government listed the northeastern U.S. population of piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*) as federally threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Such a listing mandated that all federal agencies develop management plans to protect this shorebird species.

In New York City, these birds nest along Gateway National Recreation Area's beachfronts at Breezy Point, Riis Park, and Rockaway Beach, where many people recreate. At first, there was much resistance to closing sections of Breezy Point beach to vehicles and active recreation during nesting season (March 15-September 1), but over the years people have settled in to a somewhat peaceful coexistence. Unfortunately,

with large human populations come numbers of cats, dogs, and other urban predators such as raccoons, opossum, rats, and crows—all of which tend to disrupt nesting plovers either by direct predation on eggs and chicks or nest site disturbance. In recent years, other wildlife species, such as American oystercatchers and ghost crabs, have extended their population ranges northward and have been documented as taking young piping plovers. In fact, according to long-term volunteer Don Davis, 2010 was a low productive breeding year for the plovers with none fledged from 13 nests at the Arverne area in Rockaway (Beach 32nd to Beach 78th Streets) due possibly to an abundance of ghost crabs. Interestingly, New York State endangered least terns nest in the same area and had a good year. Tony Luscombe, plover ranger for the National Park Service, is also concerned about the population increase of ghost crabs and oystercatchers on beaches at Breezy Point, as plover fledging had little success at 18 nest sites.

Sea level rise is probably the major factor looming in the not too distant future as flooding from higher tides will severely reduce nesting and foraging habitat. Will the piping plover survive into the 22nd Century? Unless we develop plans now to offset the threats from coastal development, global warming, and sea level rise, this lovely little coastal shorebird may vanish along with many other species unable to adapt to these rapid changes in habitat. The prognosis is not good, but hope springs eternal, and we must make the effort. One critical thing we can do is to make sure that enough funding for habitat protection and enhancement is included in the upcoming revision of the National Park Service's Gateway Management Plan.



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NYC AUDUBON MISSION & VISION

Mission: NYC Audubon is a grass-roots community that works for the protection of wild birds and habitat in the five boroughs, improving the quality of life for all New Yorkers.

Vision: NYC Audubon envisions a day when birds and people in the five boroughs enjoy a healthy, livable habitat.

THE URBAN AUDUBON

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Small Photographs Susan Elbin, Steve Nanz, and Don Riepe



PRESIDENT'S PERCH

Oakes Ames



A recent article in *The New York Times* reported on a study for the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation that ranks the United States 24th, the lowest among 24 member countries in children's science literacy. How can America take the lead in reducing greenhouse gases and in environmental conservation worldwide if we aren't providing our students with the knowledge and skills to become involved?



Look Around New York City,
NYC Audubon's Newsletter Distributed
Free to Participating Schools

For elementary school students, NYC Audubon's publication *Look Around New York City* teaches youngsters about conservation issues and scientific approaches to solutions. Older kids and adults can engage in NYC Audubon's expanding citizen science opportunities in "hands-on" conservation. Those who wish to volunteer should go to volunteer@nycaudubon.org.

On field trips, NYC Audubon participants learn to identify birds and learn why NYC is important to their survival. Those who wish to take part should visit www.nycaudubon.org and view our Trips & Classes, which vary from season to season. And in learning what birds look like, participants also gain a deeper understanding of avian behavior, habitat affinities, and migration ecology. Such knowledge helps students become scientifically literate and stimulates their curiosity and powers of observation. Above all, NYC Audubon seeks to encourage scientific habits of mind as well as factual knowledge and to instill a passion for conservation.

It has been a pleasure to serve as the president of NYC Audubon for the last two years. My term is up in June. I am proud of the emphasis on science that we have taken over the last 30 years. The new president has my best wishes and my complete support in maintaining NYC Audubon as a leader of environmental conservation in our city.

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 – Rm 1523, New York, NY 10010, for its general purposes." Consult your attorney and give Executive Director Glenn Phillips a call at 212-691-7483.

CONSERVATION NOTES

Liz Craig



Gearing up for the 2011 Harbor Herons nesting survey in May/June, I'd like to review the highlights from 2010, the 25th consecutive year of the survey. The primary objective of the surveys is to monitor the population status of herons, egrets, ibis, and cormorants on select islands in New York/New Jersey Harbor and surrounding waterways, while also noting the presence of other nesting bird species and current nesting habitat.

In the last survey, nine species of long-legged wading birds nested on nine islands in New York Harbor. These species included black-crowned night-heron, great egret, snowy egret, glossy ibis, yellow-crowned night-heron, little blue heron, tricolored heron, cattle egret, and green heron. Since the previous comprehensive nesting survey in 2007, population increases were observed for the black-crowned night-heron, yellow-crowned night-heron, great egret, snowy egret, and glossy ibis. The tricolored herons, little blue herons, green herons, and cattle egrets continued to nest at low numbers. Black-crowned night-herons continued to be the most abundant nesting species. A total of 1,372 double-crested cormorant nests were observed, representing an increase from the 2007 total of 1,046 nests and the 2009 total of 1,183 nests. Gull nesting activity was observed on all surveyed islands

using both adult and nest counts in 2010.

The largest species diversity (eight species) was observed on Canarsie Pol in Jamaica Bay, as in previous years. The greatest total number of nests was observed on Hoffman Island (624 nests), surpassing South Brother Island, which had been the largest wader colony in previous years, and continued to support a large portion of the wader community in 2010 (456 nests). No active wader nests were observed on the three islands in the Arthur Kill and Kill van Kull. Following an eight-year decline, this marked the third consecutive year in which no waders were observed nesting on North Brother Island. Mainland nesting of yellow-crowned night-herons was observed at the Redfern Houses colony in Far Rockaway, where 65 nests were observed. Double-crested cormorants nested on eight islands, including Canarsie Pol (for the first time in the history of these surveys).

Continued monitoring is essential to track the health of the metropolitan populations as we try to protect this resource. Because we know that some of the New York City waterbirds winter on the Gulf coast, monitoring in 2011 may help us understand possible impacts of the Gulf of Mexico oil spill on breeding birds in New York City.

VOLUNTEER!



Work in our friendly office or in the field and make a difference for New York City's wildlife!

OFFICE HELPERS

Answer inquiries about wildlife, our field trips, classes, events, and conservation work. Help with mailings, filing, and general office work. Computer skills and birding knowledge are not required.

Computer Wiz: Help keep NYC Audubon's website up-to-date! Prior web development experience required.

Social Media: Tweet! Help us get the word out in social media sites.

HANDS-ON HELPING BIRDS

Citizen Science Volunteers: Become a citizen scientist and help conduct conservation research.

•**Observe herons and egrets in our Harbor Herons Foraging Study** as the waterbirds search for food in NYC waterways.

Orientations: Saturday, April 9, 12-2pm; Tuesday, April 12, 6-8pm

•**Count shorebirds and horse-shoe crabs, or clean beaches in our Natural Areas Initiative in Jamaica Bay**, an important stopover for migratory shorebirds.

Orientation: Monday, April 11, 6-7:30pm

Project Safe Flight: Spring is here and thousands of songbirds migrate through NYC. Rescue stunned or injured birds and record any casualties. Volunteers are needed to monitor designated buildings for bird collisions. Learn how to collect data and handle injured birds.

Orientations: Thursday, March 24, 6-7pm, and Monday, March 28, 6-7pm

Bird Transporters: Transport injured birds to licensed wildlife rehabilitators in the area.

Orientation sessions are held at our offices at 71 West 23rd Street, Suite 1523, NY, NY. To volunteer, contact Tod Winston at 212-691-7483 or e-mail volunteer@nycaudubon.org. Please add the program title in the subject line.

continued on page 4

VOLUNTEER! (CONTINUED)



TOGETHERGREEN VOLUNTEER DAYS

Join volunteers in removing invasive species, planting new trees and cleaning these sites this spring:

Riverside Park's Woodland Restoration Area in Manhattan (116th Street) Saturday April 9, 10am-1pm.

Rocky Point Beach marsh and dunes in Breezy Point, Queens. Saturday, April 23, 10am–2pm. Help us celebrate Earth Day. In partnership with American Littoral Society, National Park Service, and NYC Department of Environmental Protection.

Join us and Million Trees NYC in the spring planting event Saturday, April 30. In partnership with NYC Department of Parks and Recreation.

StarrTrips

MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, AND SATURDAY MORNINGS IN CENTRAL PARK, SATURDAY, APRIL 2–WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1

Join Starr Saphir for bird watching in Central Park. On Mondays and Wednesdays, meet at 7:30am sharp at 81st and Central Park West (SE corner). On Tuesdays, meet at 9am sharp at 103rd and Central Park West (parkside). On Saturdays, meet at 7:30am sharp at 103rd and Central Park West (parkside). All Starr Trips are non-smoking. No registration necessary. For more information, call Starr at 917-306-3808. \$8 (\$4 for full time students)

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Carol Peace Robins



Ann Seligman and Magellanic Penguin Friends in Chile

Ann Seligman is that rare species: a lifelong New Yorker. Born on the Upper West Side, she now lives near the United Nations in a rent-stabilized apartment (rarer still!) with her husband and two cats.

And she's a distinctive New Yorker for another reason, too. She volunteers. On her Community Board, she's fighting to create open space in an area that has little. For NYC Audubon, she's one of our most dedicated volunteers, assisting on Harbor Heron Cruises, handing out binoculars on bird walks, conducting horseshoe crab and shorebird surveys, and aiding in bird rescues.

Working with John Rowden, Manager of our Citizen Science program, Ann and other volunteers monitor Jamaica Bay's horseshoe crab population throughout spring and summer. The work is vitally important as it focuses attention on the role of Jamaica Bay in shorebird migration.

As part of Project Safe Flight, Ann has patrolled targeted areas in search of injured or dead birds that have collided with windows in city buildings. Currently she's one of the people on call, paper bags in hand, to pick up injured birds in response to calls from concerned New Yorkers who've found them. Ann makes sure the injured birds reach licensed rehabilitors in the City.

Ann's career path has meandered from information technology to the Environmental Defense Fund. Although she has a degree in wildlife biology from Cornell and has always loved nature, she finds she much prefers her field work in short spurts. So wearing a variety of volunteer hats is a win-win situation for Ann—and, it goes without saying, for NYC Audubon.

ONE SMALL STEP FOR MAN: CALCULATING YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

Melissa Husby

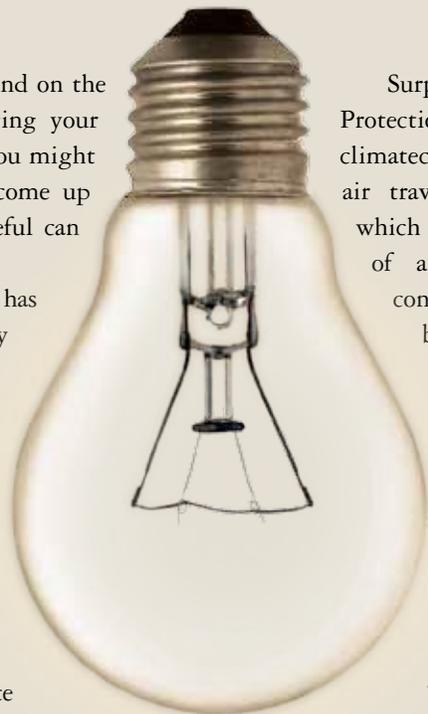
©Chris Rubin

Carbon footprint calculators abound on the Internet, but if you try plugging your numbers into a few examples, you might be frustrated to see a different result come up every time. Why is that? And how useful can they really be?

Each carbon footprint calculator has unique features, but for the most part, they focus on the same three areas: household energy usage, transportation, and personal consumption. Household use is fairly intuitive—simply gather your latest utility bills and tally up how much electricity, natural gas, heating oil, or propane you consumed last month. If you had a particularly low month, you might enter your monthly average instead to get a more accurate picture of your annual consumption.

New Yorkers tend to feel smug about their transportation energy use. The vast public transit system has encouraged 54% of the city's households to go without a car, and the per-mile carbon emissions of a subway or bus rider are less than one-quarter those of an individual driving to work alone. But the moment we step on a plane, we must kiss our "green" pretensions goodbye. A round-trip flight from New York City to Los Angeles will rack up more than one ton of CO₂ emissions per passenger.

Carbon footprint calculators diverge most in their approach to calculating personal consumption, which is far more difficult to quantify than household or transportation energy use. The University of California, Berkeley's CoolClimate Calculator (www.coolclimate.berkeley.edu) is perhaps the most exhaustive in this respect, asking for monthly expenditures on several subcategories of food, goods, and services. It may be tiresome to parse out the frequency with which you eat fish versus beef, but more detail will yield a more accurate picture of your actual carbon usage.



Surprisingly, the United States Environmental Protection Agency's calculator (www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/individual.html) ignores air travel and personal consumption entirely, which means it presents a very limited picture of an individual's or household's carbon consumption. But these weaknesses are offset by a very helpful section that allows users to calculate how specific behaviors (such as turning down the thermostat a few degrees or replacing incandescent light bulbs) will reduce household and personal vehicle energy consumption—saving them not just carbon emissions but dollars as well.

Beware of calculators that require you to input very few hard numbers. The Nature Conservancy's calculator (www.nature.org/initiatives/climatechange/calculator/) asks few questions about users' current consumption levels, instead focusing on how they are trying to reduce their impact (such as by installing efficient lighting or eating organic food). This feel-good approach does not yield very useful information about one's environmental impact.

Ultimately, no carbon footprint calculator can provide more than a rough estimate of any one individual's or household's contribution to global warming, but they are useful educational tools for consumers interested in reducing their emissions. Typing in how often I drive (never), fly (twice a year), eat meat (three times a week), or buy new clothing (no comment) forced me to articulate how the choices I make affect the world around me. Based on the different calculators I tried, my carbon footprint is somewhere around half that of the average American—but that still makes it more than three times higher than the global average. Seeing the numbers flashing across my screen surprised me, and will definitely encourage me to consume less in the future.



EVENTS AND ADVENTURES

- **NYC Audubon Events**
- **Partnership Events**

- **VAN CORTLANDT BIRD WALKS, THE BRONX**

Saturdays, March 5 - April 30, 8-9:30am

Guides: Andrew Baksh or Urban Park Rangers (first Saturday of the month)

With the Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy and NYC Department of Parks and Recreation

Meet at Van Cortland Nature Center. Influential birders such as Roger Tory Peterson and Allan D. Cruickshank learned their craft on Van Cortlandt Park's ecologically diverse grounds, and these walks celebrate the tradition set by them. Participants will look for resident and migrant species and discuss a wide range of avian topics. For more information, please call 718-548-0912. No registration necessary. No limit. Free

- **BIRDING ALONG THE HUDSON**

Sundays, 9:30-11:30am

March 13 – Wave Hill

March 27 – Battery Park

April 10 – Wave Hill

April 24 – The Highline

Guide: Gabriel Willow

With Wave Hill

For Wave Hill walks meet at Perkins Visitor Center. For Battery Park, meet in the park at the corner of Greenwich Street and Battery Place. For the Highline, meet on the Highline, at the top of the entrance stairs located on 14th Street just east of 10th Avenue (also accessible by elevator). Explore the Hudson River's avian ecology starting at the tip of Manhattan and migrating north. Ideal for ages 10 and up. Registration recommended, at www.wavehill.org, by calling 718-549-3200 x305 or at the Perkins Visitor Center. Severe weather cancels (For weather-related updates, call 718-549-3200 x245 by 8am the day of the walk.) \$10 for Wave Hill or

NYC Audubon members/\$18 non-members (members of other host organizations also enjoy member prices when walks take place at their location)

- **WINTER BIRDS OF BARNEGAT, NJ**

Tuesday, March 1, 9am-4pm

Guide: Joe Giunta, Happy Warblers LLC

Explore Barnegat Inlet's expansive beach to view the winter birds that gather where land, bay, and sea meet. Search for harlequin ducks, horned larks, Lapland longspurs, snow buntings, and snowy and short-eared owls. Bring lunch, water, and binoculars. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 12. \$80

© Steve Nantz



Harlequin Ducks

- **WINTER BIRDS OF SANDY HOOK, NJ**

Sunday, March 6, 10am-5pm

Guide: Joe Giunta, Happy Warblers LLC

Sandy Hook, a spectacular barrier island at the northernmost point of the NJ coast, hosts a variety of species including Arctic-bound migrants and harbor seals that lie on the beach to warm up in the sun. Other possible sightings: loons, sea ducks, snow buntings and horned larks. Bring lunch, water, and binoculars. Transport by private coach included. Limited to 40. \$65

- **THE END OF WINTER AT JONES BEACH, LI**

Tuesday, March 8, 8am-4pm

Guide: Peter Mott

Several bird species that nest in the far north spend the winter at Jones Beach, where they prosper in a habitat similar to their summer homes. We will start at Point Lookout and work eastward as far as Robert Moses State Park in hopes of finding an interesting variety of avian guests. Bring lunch, water, and binoculars. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 12. \$40

- **BEGINNING BIRDING**

Classes: Mondays, March 14 and March 21, 6:30-8:30pm

Trips: Saturday, March 19, 10am-2pm (Jamaica Bay) and Saturday,

Refuge Visitor Center. Hike around the East and West Ponds and gardens to look for returning ibis, egrets, oystercatchers, phoebes, and other migrants. There will be a digital slide program before the hike. To register, contact Don Riepe at 718-318-9344 or donriep@gmail.com. Limited to 25. Free

- **SPRING HIKE IN THE GREENBELT, STATEN ISLAND**

Saturday, April 2, 9:15am-2pm

(Rain Date: Saturday, April 9)

Guide: Gabriel Willow

With NYC Department of Parks and Recreation and the Greenbelt Conservancy

Meet at the Manhattan terminal of the S.I. Ferry and begin your tour on water. Explore the 3,000-acre Staten Island Greenbelt and learn about the imperiled Pouch Camp property: 143 acres of unspoiled woods and wetlands under threat of development. Look for early spring migrants and learn about the Greenbelt's ecology. Includes refreshments at the Greenbelt Nature Center and transportation on Staten Island. Limited to 20. \$35

- **BIRDING TOURS OF BRYANT PARK, MANHATTAN**

Mondays, April 11-May 16, 8-9am

Thursdays, April 14-May 19, 5-6pm

Guide: Gabriel Willow or Glenn Phillips

With Bryant Park Corporation

Meet at the Birding Tour sign at 42nd Street and 6th Ave. entrance to the park. Discover the varieties of birds that call Bryant Park home with guided tours. No limit. Free

- **"WOODCOCKTAILS" AT JAMAICA BAY**

Tuesday, April 12, 3-8pm

Guide: Peter Mott

After a leisurely check of Jamaica Bay National Wildlife Refuge's West Pond and gardens, we will adjourn to the woodcock courting grounds and sip cocktails while

March 26, 8-11am (Central Park)

Instructor: Starr Saphir

Learn to identify the birds that migrate northwards through New York City from Central and South America. Includes two classes and two trips—one to Central Park to see vireos, warblers, and tanagers, and one to Jamaica Bay to see herons, egrets, and shorebirds. Limited to 13. \$85

- **EARLY SPRING MIGRANTS AT JAMAICA BAY**

Saturday, March 26, 10am-1pm

Guides: Don Riepe, Andrew Baksh With Gateway National Recreation Area

Meet at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife



looking for male woodcocks executing dramatic flight displays. In limited light, we hope to see them in the air and, perhaps, on the ground approaching waiting females. Includes transport by passenger van and refreshments. Contributing Members only. Limited to 12. \$20

● **PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP: SONGBIRD MIGRANTS AND INSECTS IN PROSPECT PARK, BROOKLYN**

Saturday, April 16, 10am-1pm

Guide: Steve Nanz

Meet at the Grand Army Plaza park entrance at the James Samuel Thomas Stranahan statue, across the street from Brooklyn Library. Prospect Park's varied landscapes provide crucial habitat for multiple species of migratory songbirds. Shoot songbirds and learn insect macro-photography using conservation-friendly field techniques. Digital cameras are appropriate, long and short lenses as possible. Limited to 8. \$50

● **MORNING SPRING MIGRATION WALKS IN CENTRAL PARK**

Wednesdays, April 20-May 18, 7:30am-10am

Guide: Joe Giunta, Happy Warblers LLC

Meet at 72nd Street and Central Park West. This five-week series of walks will observe the waves of birds through Central Park during spring migration. Bring binoculars. Limited to 15. \$80

● **BEST OF BIRDING: NYC'S TOP HOTSPOTS**

Saturday, April 23, 8am-noon, Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center

Thursday, April 28, 8-9:30am, 103rd Street and Central Park West, Parkside

Saturday, April 30, 8am-noon, Prospect Park Audubon Center

Guide: Gabriel Willow With Prospect Park Audubon Center

Meet at the sites mentioned above for each walk. Welcome spring migration with this series of trips to NYC's best birding hot spots: Central Park, Prospect Park, and Jamaica Bay. These three Important Bird Areas host myriad songbirds, shorebirds, raptors, and waterfowl. Come see the best nature NYC has to offer! Limited to 20. Prospect Park Alliance members, call NYC Audubon at 212-691-7483 to receive a member discount. \$55

● **EVENING SPRING MIGRATION WALKS IN CENTRAL PARK**

Tuesdays, April 26-May 17, 5:30pm-7pm

Guide: Gabriel Willow

Meet at 72nd Street and Central Park West for this four-week series of walks. Witness the spectacle of spring migration as songbirds follow the Atlantic flyway northwards. Look for orioles, tanagers, warblers, vireos and other migrants in the wilds of Central Park, and learn about the finer points of their identification and ecology. Bring binoculars. Limited to 15. \$70

● **DISTINGUISHING BIRDS BY THEIR SONG**



Black-throated Green Warbler

Tuesday, April 26, 6:30-8:30pm (class); Saturday April 30, 8am-noon (trip)

Instructor: Joe Giunta, Happy Warblers LLC

Do you ever wonder who is singing? Learn to identify the large variety of migrant and resident birds in New York City. Limited to 15. \$45

● **STERLING FOREST WARBLERS, NY**

Sunday, May 1, 9am-6pm

Guides: Don Riepe, Andrew Baksh

Explore the woodland and pond habitat of the 20,000-acre Sterling Forest preserve during peak spring migration. Look for nesting warblers (including golden-winged, cerulean, hooded, and blue-winged) as well as wildflowers, reptiles, and amphibians. Visit the rustic visitor center. Bring lunch, water, and binoculars. Transportation by private coach provided. Limited to 40. \$65

● **BIKING & BIRDING: PROSPECT PARK AND GREENWOOD CEMETERY, BROOKLYN**

Sunday, May 1, 9am-1pm

Guide: Gabriel Willow With Prospect Park Audubon Center

Meet at the Grand Army Plaza Arch. May is Bike Month. To celebrate, get back on your bike! Tour Prospect Park, an Important Bird Area, and Green-Wood Cemetery, home to nesting parrots. A gentle ride of moderate distance with some hills. Bring binoculars, water, and your bicycle. Limited to 15. Prospect Park Alliance members, call NYC Audubon at 212-691-7483 to receive a member discount. \$30

● **EVENING SPRING MIGRATION WALKS IN PROSPECT PARK, BROOKLYN**
Wednesdays, May 4 and June 1, 5:30-7pm

Guide: Gabriel Willow

Meet at the Grand Army Plaza Arch. Experience the spectacle and wonder of spring migration in beautiful Prospect Park. Site of Brooklyn's only lake and its last stand of native forest, this park is home to hundreds of species of migratory waterfowl, raptors, and songbirds (nearly 250 species have been seen here!). Limited to 15. \$45

● **SPRING WARBLERS**

Thursday, May 5, 6:30-8:30pm (class); Sunday, May 8, 8-11am (trip)

Instructor: Joe Giunta, Happy Warblers LLC

Learn to identify the 30-plus species of warblers that migrate through our area each spring, using field marks and other techniques. Field trip to Central Park. Limited to 15. \$45

● **PEREGRINES OF LOWER MANHATTAN**

Saturday, May 7, 10am-1pm

Guide: Gabriel Willow

Meet just east of City Hall Park in Printing House Square. The peregrine falcon is a bird of myth and legend, the world's fastest flyer. Incredibly, New York City now boasts the world's highest densities of this formerly endangered species: Roughly 15 pairs nest here. We'll visit some of the falcon's favorite haunts, and may glimpse parents feeding their chicks. Limited to 15. \$25

● **SPRING MIGRATION BIRDWALK AT JAMAICA BAY**

Saturday, May 7, 9am-12pm

Guide: Don Riepe With Gateway National Recreation Area

Meet at the the Jamaica Bay NWR Visitor Center for a hike around the gardens and ponds to look for warblers, scarlet tanagers and other spring migrants. To register, contact Don Riepe at 718-318-9344 or donriep@gmail.com. Limit 25. Free

continued on page 8

EVENTS AND ADVENTURES (CONTINUED)

● EXPLORE THE BRONX RIVER BY ROWBOAT

Saturday, May 14, 1-3pm

Guide: Chrissy Word

With Rocking the Boat

Launch from Hunts Point Riverside Park and explore the Bronx River aboard a hand-built wooden boat, led by experienced rowers. 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, as well as its social and cultural history. Rowing optional! Limited to 20. \$35 for adults, \$25 for ages 18 and under

● PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP: SALTMARSH SPARROWS, WADERS, AND MORE AT MARINE NATURE STUDY AREA, LI

Saturday, May 21, 8am-noon

Instructor: David Speiser

Meet in the parking lot of the

Marine Nature Study Area in Oceanside, NY. Focus on breeding species such as saltmarsh sparrow, osprey, yellow-crowned night heron, and other waders and shorebirds. Carpooling may be arranged for those without private transportation. Limited to 8. \$70

● BIRDS AND PLANTS: THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN IN SPRINGTIME, THE BRONX

Saturday, May 21, 10am-1pm

Guides: Gabriel Willow, NYBG Docent

With the New York Botanical Garden

Enter through the Moshulu gate and meet at the Reflecting Pool near the Visitor Center. The NY Botanical Garden is home to a large tract of East Coast old-growth forest. During the peak of spring migration, the beautiful gardens come alive with migrating songbirds. Limited to 15. \$25

● RED KNOTS AND HORSESHOE CRABS AT PLUM BEACH, BROOKLYN

Saturday, May 21, 11am-2pm

Guide: Don Riepe

With Gateway National Recreation Area

Meet at Plum Beach Brooklyn to see the annual mating ritual of the prehistoric horseshoe crab, along with red knots, sanderlings, and ruddy turnstones. Hike along the beach and marshland edges to see fiddler crabs, egrets, and other wildlife. Bring lunch and binoculars. To register, contact Don Riepe at 718-318-9344 or donriep@gmail.com. Limited to 25. Free

● HAWK WATCH IN ASTORIA PARK, QUEENS

Sunday, May 22, 11am-12:30pm

Guide: Urban Park Rangers With NYC Department of Parks & Recreation, Urban Park Rangers

Meet at the parking lot at Hoyt Avenue and 19th Street in Astoria. A pair of red-tailed hawks has been nesting in Astoria Park on the RFK Bridge for years. Observe these residents and learn about their nesting and foraging habits. Registration necessary through NYC Audubon. Limited to 30. Free

● JAMAICA BAY SUNSET CRUISE, QUEENS

Saturday, May 28, 4-7pm

Guides: Don Riepe, Mickey Cohen With American Littoral Society

Meet at Pier 2 in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn. Enjoy a three-hour narrated cruise aboard the 100-foot boat "Golden Sunshine." Visit backwater marshes near JFK Airport, and learn about the 13,000-acre Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. See nesting peregrine falcons, ospreys, egrets, shorebirds, and waterfowl. Includes refreshments. To register, contact Don Riepe at 718-318-9344 or donriep@gmail.com. Limited to 140. \$45

● TO REGISTER FOR ALL NYC AUDUBON EVENTS and for more information, visit www.nycaudubon.org or call 212-691-7483 unless otherwise specified.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Classes meet at 71 West 23rd St. room 1523.
- Contributing Members (Student/Senior level and up) receive a 10% discount on most local trips and classes. See membership form on page 11.
- For all coach and van trips, the meeting location is in front of 71 West 23rd St. in Manhattan unless otherwise specified.
- We depart promptly at the stated start time.
- For all overnight trips, membership in NYC Audubon at the Student/Senior level and up is required. See membership form on page 11.

NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL TRIPS

● ASSATEAGUE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE / CHINCOTEAGUE WILDLIFE REFUGE WEEKEND

Thursday, May 12, 9am -

Sunday, May 15, 6pm

Guide: Don Riepe

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. Carpooling may be arranged. To register, visit our website or call the office. For more trip details, contact Don Riepe at (718) 318-9344 or donriep@gmail.com. Limited to 30. \$375

● BIRDING JEWELS OF DELMARVA

Saturday, May 21, 9am -

Monday, May 23, 6pm

Guide: Joe Giunta, Happy Warblers LLC

Observe the multitude of breeding and migrating birds in the Mid-Atlantic region on this weekend trip to Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia with expert guide Joe Giunta. Bring lunch for Saturday, binoculars, and a spotting scope (if you have one). Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 10. \$565 double occupancy (\$110 single supplement)

● ROCKY COASTS, PUFFINS, AND LOBSTER BOATS: BIRDING ON THE COAST OF MAINE

Saturday, May 28-Saturday,

June 4, 2010

Guide: Gabriel Willow

Join Maine native Gabriel Willow in exploring the Maine coast, home to Atlantic puffins, moose, shorebirds, warblers, and other migratory songbirds. Stay in Camden and on the remote Monhegan Island, a birder's paradise where seeing 25-30 warbler species in a day is not uncommon. Includes double occupancy lodging, most meals, and van transportation in Maine (airfare not included). Limited to 12. \$1,500 (\$500 single room supplement)

BIRD/WINDOW COLLISIONS AT HOME

Catherine Heller

© Bird: Graham Owen; composite: Chris Rubin



What are the major dangers to birds in our country? Most everyone can cite habitat loss and pesticides, and many people know about the dangers of feral cats, particularly to shore birds. But the greatest threat to our birds may be glass windows, even if they have small panes. Daniel Klem, an ornithologist at Muhlenberg College, estimates that close to a billion birds are killed every year by flying into glass. Most are killed instantly, but others succumb when they are stunned and fall prey to gulls, rats, or other predators. All bird species are vulnerable, although migratory songbirds are the main victims.

NYC Audubon started Project Safe Flight in 1997 to address the issue in New York City, particularly Manhattan. We have rescued over 1,200 birds, persuaded buildings to retrofit their more dangerous windows, and published *Bird-Safe Building Guidelines* to help architects and designers develop solutions in new buildings (see www.nycaudubon.org/bsbg).

Private homes as well as skyscrapers endanger birds. Most home owners have heard the unpleasant thump that means a bird has hit a window; many have also found bird carcasses near their windows. Birds do not see the glass as a solid barrier; they see reflections of trees or sky or a fly-through to open space beyond.

Homeowners can reduce the collisions and save bird lives. Bird feeders can be placed within three feet of a window, so that birds visiting the feeder cannot get

up enough flight speed to hurt themselves.

Installing a pattern on a window where birds are known to hit can be uncomplicated and expensive. A NYC Audubon member puts sticky notes on her problematic windows during migration. The American Bird Conservancy (ABC) suggests placing vertical tape strips at a maximum of four inches apart or soaping windows with a design.

Decals of hawks or other raptors are not particularly successful, unless the decals are spaced very closely—and then it doesn't really matter if they are of birds of prey or an abstract design. Patterns with negative space no greater than four by two inches, the size of a hand, are most effective.

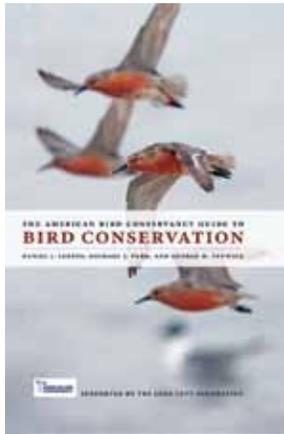
For more permanent fixes, ones that keep birds from striking glass or lessen reflectivity and transparency, ABC suggests:

- Install awnings, louvers, lattice work, or shades in front of windows.
- Install mesh window screens.
- Install unobtrusive netting in front of window. A company called Bird B Gone www.birdbgone.com has designed several types for glass windows and facades.

NYC AUDUBON WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU if you've tried these methods or any others, to learn what does or doesn't work at your home. Please call 212-691-7483 or email Susan Elbin at selbin@nycaudubon.org.

The ultimate solution would be a coating that is visible to birds but not humans. A product called Ornilux Mikado, manufactured in Germany by Arnold Glas, incorporates an ultraviolet spidery crisscross pattern within the glass visible to birds but nearly invisible to us.

Watching birds and nature from inside your home should be a pleasure. Bird fatalities are an unintended consequence of home design. But with some creativity and imagination, you should be able to see your birds and keep them safe.



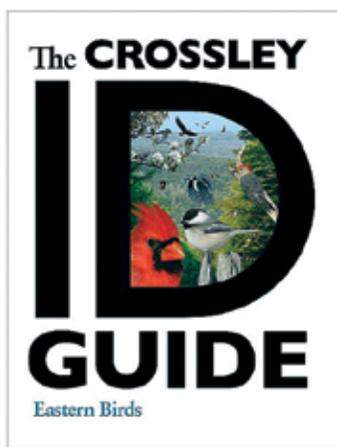
*The American Bird Conservancy
Guide to Bird Conservation*
by Daniel J. Lebbin,
Michael J. Parr,
and George H. Fenwick
(The University of Chicago
Press, 2010)

In this 400-plus-page guide, through short essays and handsome artwork and photography, authors Daniel Lebbin (a conservation biologist), Michael Parr and George Fenwick (vice president and president, respectively, of ABC) give novice birders a view of what's at risk, and experts concise facts and targets. First they serve a quick history of threats to America's birds, and highlight conservation efforts; next, score sheets, the highs, landmarks in American bird conservation, and lows, modern bird extinctions. The first chapter is really an illustrated field guide to birds most in need: 212 WatchList species, with key information on each: population, trend in numbers, a map showing range and distribution, threats, conservation efforts, and actions that can be taken to aid the species—what you can do.

Succeeding chapters are similarly engaging. The authors divide North America into 12 habitats, or “birdsapes,” geographically, of course—the eastern forests, southern arid lands—and also,

quite creatively, physically: wetlands (covering 169,776 square miles, from the Everglades to the Salton Sea); marine (3,400,000 square miles, from Cape Cod to the Northwest Hawaiian Islands). There's even the “human birdscape” (3,100,000 square miles of cities, suburbs, cropland, etc.). Top bird sites are profiled for these divisions, two pages each, noting specific WatchList species, threats, conservation efforts, and actions to be taken. (Central Park is here, listed under human birdscape, host to 11 WatchList species and a quiver full of conservation efforts, including the Christmas Bird Count and NYC Audubon's Lights Out program.) Threats—so up-to-date that the Gulf oil spill is included—are also tackled in this problem/solution/action manner.

The final chapter offers strategies and actions for bird conservation, at the personal/consumer level and by state (New York: “Key Action: Strengthen Clean Air Act”). In short, this is the birder's Baedeker to conservation and action. *SC*



The Crossley ID Guide: Eastern Birds
by Richard Crossley
(Princeton University Press,
2010)

Do you remember that Audubon guide from 1977 which relied on single bird photographs? Serious birders, while momentarily amused, quickly abandoned it and grabbed their Golden or Peterson Guide. With *The Shorebird Guide* from O'Brien, Crossley, and Karlson, the photograph hit its stride. The authors depicted mixed flocks on beaches and mudflats and taught us to use relative size and body structure for identification.

Now through the magic of Photoshop, Richard Crossley brings us a revolutionary book entitled *The Crossley ID Guide: Eastern Birds*. Imagine if you will an 8x6 photograph with a background of deciduous forest and openings of blue sky. Leafy branches crisscross at various depths of field, and within the frame are no fewer than 12 warblers. Some are perching close

enough to leap off the page, while others are flying silhouettes against the distant sky. As you gaze in amazement at the craft of these true-hued photographs, you suddenly realize that every single bird on the page is a parula warbler! In what appears to be a single shot, Crossley has combined years of photographic field shooting to bring us compound digital images with the most remarkable variety of plumages, ages, sexes, and body positions—all in natural settings.

The book will certainly prove an invaluable resource to birders and a lasting testament to Crossley's skill as a naturalist and photographer. Hopefully the book will not prove too large for use as an everyday field guide, though even as a home reference this book will endure. *JK*

News & Notes

PALE MALE'S NEW LOVE

Lola, the long-time mate of Pale Male, disappeared this winter. For more than 10 years, the two red-tailed hawks nested on the twelfth floor of a Fifth Avenue apartment facing Central Park. This January and February, Pale Male has been seen courting a new female. Hopefully, hawk watchers will see nesting success this spring!

HARBOR HERONS MEETING

Despite a foot of snow, 50 conservationists from city, state, and federal agencies and non-profits convened at Fort Wadsworth on Staten Island on January 13 for the Greater New York/New Jersey Harbor Herons and Waterbirds Annual Meeting. The group of scientists, resource managers, students, and university professors discussed research results and conservation plans for herons, egrets, ibis, and cormorants and other waterbirds and their habitat in the harbor. Results from NYC Audubon's 25th Annual Harbor Heron Nesting Survey were highlighted and acceptance of the Harbor Herons Conservation Plan to the Harbor Estuary Program was announced.

ADVISORS & STAFF

Lynn Rollins and Melanie Lyons resigned from the NYC Audubon Advisory Council. Lynn also served as a Board member and was a past president. Melanie Lyons had served on the Advisory Council since it was established. NYC Audubon is grateful to both Lynne Rollins and Melanie Lyons for their contributions and service to the organization—thank you! In our office, we are pleased to announce the addition of Lisa Synoradzki as Director of Development.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

New York City Audubon would like to recognize the following individuals for gifts made from January through December 2010.

TRIBUTE GIFTS:

- In Honor of Oakes Ames—*Marian Heiskell*
- In Honor of Betsy Barlow Rogers—*Marguerite Pitts*
- In Honor of Leslie Chase—*Nancy Symonds*
- In Honor of Greg and Susan Elbin—*Frederick Luce*
- In Honor of Marcia Fowle—*Anne Wanzer, Nancy Criscitiello, Jim & Mary Adelstein*
- In Honor of the David Hand Family—*Ellen Hand*
- In Honor of Harriet P. Krauss—*Kathleen Heenan & Clary Olmstead*
- In Honor of Jonathan Merrill—*Marti Lilien*
- In Honor of Steve Nanz—*Alan Wanzenberg*
- In Honor of Joyce R. Weidenaar—*Marcia and Philip Rothblum Foundation, Inc.*
- In Honor of Rikki Will—*Ticia Will*

MEMORIAL GIFTS:

- In Memory of Anna Conte—*Francesca Giancotti*
- In Memory of Mary Delaney—*Dr. Flynn Delaney*
- In Memory of Lilly — *Liz Lytle, Allison Knauer*
- In Memory of Dearest Mother of Jackie Talt—*Helen Pollack*
- In Memory of Joseph Tobin—*Margaret Tobin*
- In Memory of Ringo-Tucker-Drob-Goldberg—*Lenore Tucker and Laurence Goldberg*

JOIN NYC AUDUBON

Members are essential to our education and conservation work. Help protect birds and habitats in the five boroughs by joining our flock. Mail this form with your payment to:

NYC Audubon
71 West 23rd Street
Room 1523
New York, NY 10010

Membership in NYC Audubon does not include National Audubon membership or *Audubon Magazine*. Donations to NYC Audubon are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. NYC Audubon is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

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2011 LECTURE SERIES

All lectures are free and open to the public. This series has been made possible by the support of the Corcoran Group and Claude and Lucienne Bloch

**THE ARSENAL
CENTRAL PARK
64TH STREET AT 5TH AVENUE**

THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE OF BIRDING

**By Richard Crossley, author and
photographer**

Wednesday, April 13, 2011, 6pm

Crossley tells a story of past lessons learned from days growing up in the British birding scene, from travels around the world to living in Cape May. Crossley's latest book, *The Crossley ID Guide: Eastern Birds*, is the first to feature large, lifelike scenes for each species and to emphasize behaviors for identification. (See review on page 10.) Crossley will also explore the future of birding.

INVESTIGATING THE PRIVATE LIVES OF BIRDS

By Bridget Stutchbury

Wednesday, May 11, 2011, 6pm

Author of *The Private Lives of Birds*, Bridget Stutchbury will explain why some birds readily divorce their partners, what fidelity means to birds, and why mothers sometimes desert their babies. She will also talk about what tracking purple martins and wood thrushes has revealed about their amazing migrations. Bird behavior is fascinating in its own right, but is also important for understanding the conservation of birds and how they adapt to our modern world.

ANNUAL MEETING AND LECTURE: MIGRANT SONGBIRDS IN NEW YORK'S LAKE ONTARIO BASIN

By Mike Burger

Wednesday, June 8, 2011, 6pm

©David Speiser



Blackburnian Warbler

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