

The Observer

The Rockland Audubon Society Quarterly Newsletter. Since 1947. Volume 62, Number 4
December 2009 — February 2010

www.rocklandaudubon.org



Special Interest Articles

Conservation Corner:
Tom Fuller on how sustainable paper products protect birds – and what RAS is doing to help, too.
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2009 Christmas Bird Count: Carol Weiss gets local birders all geared up for the 63rd annual CBC. **Page 7**

Rockland Hot Spots: Piermont Pier

This year, Rockland Audubon's First Sunday Walk, led by Carol Weiss and Veronika Krause, is moving back to Piermont Pier. This perennial favorite is the subject of this second article in our series about favorite Rockland birding locations.

Historic Piermont Pier is located along the Hudson River in southern Rockland County in the town of Piermont, NY. Here, Sparkill Creek breaks through the Palisades Ridge, opening an important access corridor between the River and Interior. During the 17th century, Dutch settlers began arriving and "Tappan Landing" began to thrive as an important transportation hub for food and supplies. In 1824, a 500-ft pier was built across the marsh into the Hudson River to accommodate the increasing steamship traffic, and in 1832 the town, now known as Piermont, was selected to be the eastern

terminus of a rail line connecting the Hudson River and Lake Erie.

The Pier was extended to one mile in 1841 to facilitate the transfer of passengers and freight to New York City. The rail connection brought tremendous growth to the town but was short-lived. By the late 1850s, the terminus had moved to Jersey City and by 1862, half of the population of Piermont had moved away. Since then, other industries have moved into Piermont. One of the most conspicuous to birders is the Piermont Paper Company. Established in 1902 and operational until the 1980's, the huge flywheel from its steam generator now adorns the small Park at the base of the Pier, the imaginatively named "Flywheel Park".

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Sustainable Paper Products: Easy Choice to Help Birds

Canada's Boreal Forest is the greatest remaining wilderness on the continent. Its 1.4 billion acres stretch from Yukon to Newfoundland to form one of the world's most vital ecosystems. It is home to wolves, caribou, grizzly bears, and billions and billions of birds.

The Boreal Forest is North America's bird nursery. More than 300 species of birds breed there. Many associate the Boreal with nomadic winter finches such as Pine Siskins, crossbills, and Evening Grosbeaks. But did you know 40% of our ducks, geese, and swans breed in the Boreal's array of wetlands? A third of our shorebirds also nest there. And many of the spectacular warblers passing through Rockland each spring are en route to the

Boreal to raise their young. Many of these species nest nowhere else.

Unfortunately, this crucial nursery is in jeopardy. It is being logged at the rate of 2 million acres per year. Only 12% of the forest is protected, and 30% has already been designated for logging, energy, and other development. Most disturbing is that two thirds of the logging is for pulp and paper used for products such as catalogs, reading materials, and disposable paper products. Literally, this great forest is being flushed down our toilets.

And here is where consumers can play an important role. In addition to reducing junk mail and using fewer paper goods, choosing sustainable paper products can make a world of difference.

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Our Mission

Rockland Audubon Society's mission is to promote environmental conservation and foster an appreciation of birds and nature through education programs and activities.



The Observer is the newsletter of the Rockland Audubon Society, Inc. P.O. Box 404 New City, NY 10956

Editor: Tom Sullivan
Layout: Trisha Sullivan

Send articles, trip reports, poetry, drawings, photos and comments to sullivantp@gmail.com
Submission deadline: Dec. 15, 2009.

Is there something you'd like to read about in *The Observer*? Please, just let me know!

Membership

To join send a \$20 check (\$15 for senior citizens) payable to National Audubon Society to: Karen D'Alessandri 45 Camp Hill Road Pomona, NY 10970.

Allow 4 to 8 weeks for delivery of Audubon Magazine and *The Observer*.

Message from the President

Some things seem to always stay the same while other things tend to change. As always during this time of year, the cold is starting to creep into our autumn days making them crisp but invigorating. Many of our avian friends have left as they do each fall.

Once again, Rockland Audubon Society is offering some wonderful programs and field trips and informative newsletters to get you through these autumn and early winter months. We hope that you enjoy Rockland Audubon's offerings.

One of the highlights of the season is our annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC), an opportunity that can challenge birders of every skill level. Please see Carol Weiss' information about the CBC in this newsletter on how to get involved in this important citizen science project.

You will continue to see articles in *The Observer* about significant environmental topics, such as Tom Fuller's article in this issue on considerations to be made when purchasing paper products. Tom's article provides advice on how you can alter your consumption of paper products.

Along the same vein as Tom's article, you will see one major change in Rockland Audubon's operations later in 2010. Rockland Audubon will begin doing its part to decrease its paper use: *The Observer* will be going paperless. In late 2010, you will receive your copy of the newsletter electronically (special arrangements can be made for members who do not have a computer or Internet access).

As we all understand, people's misuse of resources causes many environmental issues, and as individuals and as an organization, we can easily do our part by limiting our consumption of this one resource at the very least. We know that you, as environmentalists, understand our reasoning behind this change.

Thank you for your continued support of Rockland Audubon Society.

Yours Truly,
Elyse Fuller
November 2009

Welcome New Members: Robert Babcock, Jennifer Barrett, Michael A. Bell, Patricia Berenger, Robert & Betsy McMann, Wallace Bjork, Mr. Mike Blickensde, Al Cann, Evelyn Cohen, Norman Cohen, Paula Conoscenti, Marcia Custer, Kathleen Diamond, Clyde Doebler, C. G. Dornbush, Holly L. Dunitz, Elisha Eisen, Dr. Carolyn Friedman, Batsheva Gamoran, Allen & Judith Gehrig, Rebecca Gmucs, Roberta Halfi, Lloyd Hamilton Jr., Daniel Henry, Richard Iannuzzi, Stacey Johnson, Hazel Jung, Thomas Kilroy, Nundha Koonaporn, Bruce Kramer, James Kraus, Michael Kronenberg, Annette Laconti, Nancy Lind, Edith Loeb, Karie Loomis, Bill Mahoney, Virginia A. Mc Veigh, Cal Mendelsohn, Margaret Mitsch, Joanne Norell, Susan Northcutt, Patricia Peneno, George P. Perkinson, Laura Plessner, Marian Pollack, Sydelle Ratchik, Richard A. Ritzmann, Marguerite (Marge) Rogers, Leslie Rosenberg, Cathy Rutigliano, E. Saccardi, Marion Schwartz, Katherine Schwarz, Lisa Ann Siewers, Mary Sine, Linda Tabak, Robert Towle, Mr. & Mrs. Barry Wallach, Brian Walsh, Janet M. Wheeler

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Sustainable Paper Products Help Birds, *con't* from page 1

Not all paper products are made alike. When buying paper towels, tissues, napkins, and toilet paper, demand high recycled content, particularly post-consumer content. Post-consumer fibers come from paper previously used by consumers that would have otherwise found its way into the waste stream. The table below can help you make wise choices. For a complete, printable list of bird-friendly paper products, visit <http://www.nrdc.org/land/forests/tissueguide/walletcard.pdf>.

Paper Towel Brand	Percent Recycled	Percent Post-Consumer	Toilet Paper Brand	Percent Recycled	Percent Post-Consumer	Facial Tissue Brand	Percent Recycled	Percent Post-Consumer
Fiesta	100	80	Green Forest	100	90	Green Forest	100	90
Seventh Generation	100	80	Seventh Generation	100	80	Seventh Generation	100	80
Marcal Small Steps	100	70	Marcal	100	40	Marcal Fluff Out	100	30
Bounty	0	0	Charmin	0	0	Kleenex	0	0
Brawny	0	0	Cottonelle	0	0	Puffs	0	0
Viva	0	0	Quilted Northern	0	0	CVS	0	0

Understandably, cost can play a factor when choosing paper products. While the popular brands are generally cheaper, their environmental toll is overwhelming. In my experience, I have been able to get around the higher store cost of sustainable products by purchasing them in bulk online. In fact, when purchased in bulk, the cost of sustainable products is cheaper than buying virgin pulp products from the store. Many vendors of the recycled products reduce cost by using Amazon.com. If you can spare a shelf for these paper products, you will be saving time, money, and bird habitat. —Tom Fuller is on the RAS Conservation Committee

Rockland Audubon will be doing its part to protect resources and habitat when *The Observer* goes paperless in late 2010. To receive newsletter electronically, please send your e-mail address to webmaster Alan Wells at awells@bestweb.net. Please put [RAS NEWS] in the subject line and your name in the body of the e-mail. If you do not have e-mail, please call (845) 639-9216 to continue receiving a paper copy. Thank you for your cooperation in this important transition to a more sustainable Rockland Audubon Society.

From Mothering Heights

I'm so sick of rain and gloomy days, I could scream. In fact, during the last downpour I DID scream, and something deep in the woods answered me. So, fearing I had accidentally mimicked some unsavory critter's mating call, I have since refrained from that practice.

Nevertheless, what a nasty Spring and Summer we've had! There has been so much water, the only thing my butterfly garden has attracted is fish! All my plants are tall and green, but there is no flowering to speak of. And, I still haven't cleared all the residual leaf litter because it is too wet and heavy to move. Which brings me to the good news/bad news scenario. Or, as one of my daughters puts it, "Every silver lining starts with a cloud, Mom!"

In mathematical terms: DeadLeaves (squared) + LotsOfRain (cubed) - Sun = BUGS (to infinity and beyond) = BirdFood. This is a paradox of Mother Nature, of whom I am a huge fan. On the one hand, every time I step outside, I am attacked by kamikaze hoards of vicious, blood-sucking, unrelenting insects. Oh, don't be fooled by their size. They are the fodder of horror films, and there is not enough bug repellent in Rockland County to keep them at bay! And how, pray tell, do they manage to bite me (through multiple layers of clothing, no less) on the very places I cannot reach? On the other hand (here's the good news part), whenever I do rake away a bunch of leaves, I uncover an abundant stash of *Aggravatus Insectus*, and I am quickly rewarded with multitudes of voracious birds. I am so in awe of their intelligence and networking skills. As soon as one little guy discovers the newly created feast, he is quickly joined by dozens of his closest friends. Verizon should have such a good communications system! Friends, Family and Flocks indeed! And because of the plentitude of bugs, there have been more birds on Mothering Heights this year than the last ten combined.

So, I put up with the annoyance in order to relish the enjoyment. The Optimist in me says the glass is half full, the Pessimist that it's half empty. But as the humidity increases and I once again listen to the rumble of thunder in the distance, and the crack of lighting hitting yet another tree limb, the Realist in me decides that it doesn't much matter when the glass is leaking!
— Peggy Bruner

If it is raining, call the field trip leader at least one hour before the meeting time to see if the trip is a go. Also, call the trip leader for directions to the field trip site, or if you will be on the trip but not at the meeting place.

6 Dec. (Sun) First Sunday Walks at Piermont Pier

Meet Veronika Krause at 8am at the parking lot by the ball field at the Piermont Pier entrance. Over by 10 a.m. 845-359-9294

20 Dec. (Sun) Annual Christmas Bird Count

Join a team for our 63rd Christmas Bird Count. Check www.rocklandaudubon.org or call Carol Weiss. 845-358-3659

1 JAN (Fri) Birding at Jones Beach, NY

Meet Alan & Della Wells at the Commuter Parking Lot, Route 303 North, West Nyack, at 5:45am. Enjoy the first sunrise of the New Year and jumpstart your year list at Jones Beach and Point Lookout. 845-942-5751

3 JAN (Sun) First Sunday Walk at Piermont Pier

Meet Carol Weiss at 8am at the parking lot by the ball field at the Piermont Pier entrance. Over by 10am. 845-358-3659

10 JAN (Sun) Winter at Congers Memorial Park

Meet Matt Beckerle at 10am at the main parking lot of Congers Memorial Park (6 Gilchrist Rd.) Check out the variety of trees and birds along the eastern edge of Congers Lake and more. Path is wheelchair-accessible, flat and paved. 845-735-5411

16 JAN (Sat) Pelham Bay Park

Meet Jim Previdi at 8am at the Commuter Parking Lot, Route 303 North, West Nyack, for carpooling. Search for owls & waterfowl in this wild(er) corner of the Bronx. Dress warmly; bring snack & hot drink. Return by early afternoon. 845-942-8448

19 JAN (Tue) Winter Waterfowl Count

Meet Carol Weiss at 9am at the parking lot by the baseball field at the entrance to Piermont Pier. We will walk the pier to count ducks and from there, drive north through the county counting all the waterfowl we can find. Stops will be made wherever there is open water, and whenever participants need to warm up. Please call Carol if you can help with this **statewide count**. Results are reported to the NYSDEC. We will change the date if the weather is unfavorable. 845-358-3659

30 JAN (Sat) Winter Birding in Orange County

Meet Jim Previdi at 2pm at the Commuter Parking Lot, Route 303 North, West Nyack, for carpooling. See raptors and field birds. Northern harriers and short-eared owls are usually sighted just before sunset. Should return by 6:30 p.m. 845-942-8448

6 FEB (Sat) Hook Mountain Hike

Meet Vince Plogar at 9am at Landing Road near the firehouse in Rockland Lake. Hike the long path above the Hudson to see what is around.

845-596-8924

7 FEB (Sun) First Sunday Walk at Piermont Pier

Meet Veronika Krause at 8am at the parking lot by the ball field at the Piermont Pier entrance. Over by 10am. 845-359-9294

12 FEB (Fri) Owl Prowl at Stony Point Battlefield

Meet Della and Alan Wells at 7:30pm on the circle at the arch at the end of Battlefield Rd, accessed from Park Rd. off Route 9W in Stony Point. 845-942-5751

14 FEB (Sun) Rockland Lake State Park

Meet Della and Alan Wells at 9am at the flagpole in the North Pool parking lot. Looking for late wintering ducks. Great for beginners. Over by 11:30 am. 845-942-5751

21 FEB (Sun) Croton Point Park

Meet Carol Weiss at 8am at the Commuter Parking Lot, Route 303 North, West Nyack, for carpooling. Look for wintering birds and possible rarities on the Westchester side of the Hudson. 845-358-3659

7 MAR (Sun) First Sunday Walk at Piermont Pier

Meet Carol Weiss at 8am at the parking lot by the ball field at the Piermont Pier entrance. Over by 10am. 845-358-3659

The legacy of the Pier has been a windfall for birders by allowing access to habitats typically not available in Rockland. The extension far out into the mid-Hudson River allows viewing of rare terns, scoters, eiders, and other sea ducks that are otherwise nearly impossible to see from shore. Additionally, the Pier creates its own unique habitat. To the south, a “backwater” cove favors the deposition of river sediments thereby creating feeding areas for shorebirds. And, when strong winds are blowing either upriver or downriver, the lee of the Pier provides welcome refuge for many species, especially for waterfowl.



Photo Credit: Alan W. Wells

The Pier is a great place to watch wildlife or just go for a walk any time of the year. Here are some of the seasonal highlights:

Fall – Beginning in late August and continuing through September, the Pier can be a delightful source of surprises. At this time, shorebirds are migrating through the area headed for points south. A few are bound to stop in for a quick snack and snooze. Most common are the diminutive Least Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, and Semipalmated Plover. Somewhat less common are Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, and both Yellowlegs species. If you look closely, on rare occasions you may also find Dunlin, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, or Pectoral Sandpiper. Many of these species are common along the coast, and only occasionally stray inland. The fall also brings southward bound raptors, often seen soaring high overhead. They too occasionally stop to feed and roost. Watch for the spectacular display of Osprey as they plunge for menhaden, a type of herring abundant in the river during the fall.

Winter – Winter brings a measure of solitude, icicle-festooned benches, and huge rafts of ducks seeking shelter from the biting north winds. Hundreds of Ruddy Duck, Canvasback, Mallard, and American Black Duck can be found in the cove along the south side of the Pier. Surprisingly, ducks have already donned their

breeding plumage and are beginning their courtship displays. This is also the time of year when some of our most unusual visitors arrive. In recent years, the Pier hosted visits from a Snowy Owl, Ivory Gull, and King Eider, drawing birders from near and far. On a winter visit to the Pier, be sure to dress warmly. It may seem balmy when you arrive, but as you leave the sheltered landside and the wind races across the icy river to smack you square in the face, you will be thankful for the extra layers!

Spring – One of the surest signs that Spring is about to arrive at the Pier is the appearance of the first Tree Swallows. Look for them around the first of April. They are easily spotted as they teeter delicately on the utility wires that run the length of the Pier or as they explore the several nest boxes affixed to some of the larger trees. In the early morning from the stands of Common Reed, listen for the “kon-ka-reeeee” song of the male Red-winged Blackbird as they establish and defend their territories. Spring is the period of greatest avian diversity at the Pier as warblers, vireos, grosbeaks, thrushes and tanagers migrate north. A few, such as Warbling Vireo, Baltimore Oriole, and American Robin, may nest in the trees lining the road.

Summer – Summer is the doldrums of Piermont birding, but a walk along the Pier is still a pleasant experience just the same. A cool breeze off the river on a sweltering day is certainly refreshing. But, be prepared for company! You will invariably be accompanied by a phalanx of anglers, dog walkers, joggers, bicyclists, and just plain strollers. Summer bird life can be uninspiring and repetitive, mostly juvenile Ring-billed and Great Black-back Gulls, European Starling, and a few Double-crested Cormorants. Large groups of disheveled looking Mallards are also common. At first glance, they appear to be all females. However, these ducks are now in “eclipse”, the drab “non-breeding” plumage. As you stroll along the pier, use your binoculars to scan the rock breakwater to the north. Often you may spot Diamondback Terrapin basking in the sunshine.

So how do you get to the Pier? You can get detailed directions from any location from the Rockland Audubon Society website, www.rocklandaudubon.org. But a bit of advice: use the Paradise Avenue approach rather than Ash Street, unless you really enjoy steep hairpin turns. And after birding? There are a number of fine restaurants and shops featuring local artists adjacent to Flywheel Park and along Main Street. — *Alan Wells is Webmaster of Rockland Audubon Society*

Birders never know where or when the next unusual or unexpected bird will appear, but Rockland birders almost always expect that the unusual will be at the Piermont Pier. This birding season was no exception. Around noon on August 17, an American Golden Plover was found at the Pier by Evan Mark and seen shortly afterwards by Michael Lester. I saw it around 2:30. The plover was close to the roadway on the north side, along the old pilings that poke through the mud. Gene Brown saw the plover around 4 PM. This was Rockland's third American Golden Plover sighting. Several other shorebirds and a couple of Laughing Gulls were also on the mud flats. The other waders were Pectoral Sandpiper (reported by Francois Vuilleumier), Ruddy Turnstone, Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers, Spotted Sandpiper, and Semipalmated Plover.

Other birds, and a snake, caught the eyes of Rockland's birders:

6/01 On a mid-afternoon walk by the pond at Lamont, I noticed something on a dead branch of an old willow tree. With binoculars I could see it was a sleeping Common Nighthawk! Linda Pistolesi

6/26 Least Bittern, ball field pond at Pier. And near the end of Pier, a male Greater Scaup! Carol Weiss

7/14 Several male Eastern Bluebirds hanging out at the dog park at Kennedy Dells New City. Kept flying down into the middle, then up onto the fence. Does someone have boxes for them? Sarah Johnson

7/19 At 7:30 AM, we saw 4 Green Herons, one mature (red legs) and 3 immature (striped necks) at the small pond in Eugene Levy Park, Town of Ramapo. Also scores of Killdeer. Lorrie and Stan Pallant

7/22 At Rockland Lake SP: 3 Cooper's Hawks, an adult and two flying youngsters begging to be fed. Veronika Krause

7/24 Nyack Beach SP: Three Peregrine Falcons high on the cliff 1/2 north of parking lot, perhaps indicating successful breeding. Carol Weiss

7/27 Tom and Elda Dow, Ed Treacy, and Jack Focht identified a Caspian Tern at the Pier. Three Short-billed Dowitchers on the mud flats. Carol Weiss

7/28 I had heard that Cliff Swallows had built nests at Rockland Lake SP and today I finally saw several flying around, near both the north and south swimming pools. Carol Weiss

7/30 Nyack Beach SP: I saw a beautiful 2 foot copperhead near the parking lot, at dusk when there were hundreds on fireflies, with families watching them. One of the moms said to her young boys, "Oh look, a snake!" I asked her to show me. Fortunately she was unfazed about it being a pit viper inches from us! It slithered up the hill. Sarah Johnson

8/7 Chris Healy identified an immature Red-headed Woodpecker in his backyard, Pearl River.

8/8 From the Pier, Drew Ciganek reported that Forster's Terns had been seen there for about two weeks and that he was watching - and had photographed - a banded Caspian Tern.

At Willow Tree Park in Ramapo I saw the following:

June and July - Great Egret

July and August - Black-crowned Night-Heron

July and August - Green Heron

July - Least Bittern

August - Great Blue Heron

Dina Shandling, Spring Valley

8/30 12 Common Nighthawks at 6:15 PM above backyard in Stony Point. Doris Metraux and John Deans

Please contact Carol with your bird sightings, at (845) 358-3659 or cweiss1124@optonline.net.

Sponsor an Audubon Program

From September – June, the Rockland Audubon Society pays \$100.00 monthly to rent program meeting space at the Rockland Country Day School in Congers. As a way to reduce our Audubon chapter's expenses, we are asking members to consider sponsoring a monthly meeting. You may sponsor a monthly meeting or share the cost with a family member or friend. You may also designate the month you wish to sponsor.

If you wish, we will be happy to recognize your generosity at the beginning of the monthly program meeting you sponsor.

Your contribution will be acknowledged by letter. The Rockland Audubon Society is a non-profit, 501(c) 3 organization.

If you would like to sponsor a program meeting, please mail a check made out to the Rockland Audubon Society to: Donna L. Nye, Treasurer, 309 Front Street, Nyack, NY 10960.

2009 Christmas Bird Count #63, Sunday, December 20

The 63rd Rockland Audubon Christmas Bird Count will be held on Sunday, December 20. From dawn to dusk, there will be counters in each of nine areas of Rockland County, enumerating the birds of each species that they see. This data is sent to National Audubon Society to be compiled and compared to other national and international counts.

Our 2008 count was extraordinary! We had the highest species count ever - 92 on Count Day and another four during the week.

Unexpected birds have been found in Rockland County on almost every CBC. Each team hopes to find a species that no other group uncovers; it's always fun to have the only one of a species. And there is always real anticipation to see if any team has found a species never before counted on the RAS CBC. In 2008, out-of-the-ordinary birds included Rough-legged Hawk, Wilson's Snipe, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, American Pipits, and Horned Lark. Unique sightings included Barred Owl in western Ramapo, redpolls in southern Ramapo, and Common Raven near Rockland Lake.

If you would like to participate in the CBC for the first time, please call Carol Weiss at 845-358-3659 or cweiss1124@optonline.net. If you counted in 2008, you will be contacted.

If you can't spend the entire day out-of-doors, we also need volunteers to watch their bird feeders on Count Day. Feeder watchers should submit the highest number of individuals seen at one time. For example, if 5 Titmice are seen at 9 a.m. and 3 at 10 a.m., the number reported should be 5, not 8. These feeder counts are very important as sometimes a species is seen only at someone's feeder on Count Day. The feeder watcher form is below.

The day will conclude with the annual potluck dinner hosted by Alan and Della Wells in Tomkins Cove, and both field participants and feeder watchers are invited. Call the Wells' at 845-942-5751 to let them know what you will contribute to the pot luck. Driving directions will be sent or emailed to participants. —Carol Weiss

- _____ Red-tailed Hawk
- _____ Sharp-shinned Hawk
- _____ Wild Turkey
- _____ Dark-eyed Junco
- _____ Rock Pigeon
- _____ Mourning Dove
- _____ Eastern Screech Owl
- _____ Northern Flicker
- _____ Red-bellied Woodpecker
- _____ Hairy Woodpecker
- _____ Downy Woodpecker
- _____ Pileated Woodpecker
- _____ Blue Jay
- _____ American Crow
- _____ Black-capped Chickadee
- _____ Tufted Titmouse
- _____ Red-breasted Nuthatch
- _____ White-breasted Nuthatch
- _____ American Robin
- _____ Gray Catbird
- _____ Northern Mockingbird
- _____ Brown Thrasher
- _____ European Starling

- _____ Eastern Towhee (Rufous-sided)
- _____ White-throated Sparrow
- _____ Field Sparrow
- _____ Song Sparrow
- _____ American Tree Sparrow
- _____ Fox Sparrow
- _____ Northern Cardinal
- _____ Red-winged Blackbird
- _____ Brown-headed Cowbird
- _____ Common Grackle
- _____ House Finch
- _____ Common Redpoll
- _____ Pine Siskin
- _____ American Goldfinch
- _____ Evening Grosbeak
- _____ House Sparrow

Other, please specify: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone or e-mail: _____

Ways to report your feeder count:

1. Come to the Countdown Potluck Dinner.
2. Phone your results: 845-942-5751.
3. E-mail your numbers: awells@bestweb.net
4. Mail to Alan Wells, 9 Dunderberg Rd., Tomkins Cove, NY 10986 within two days of the count. Photos welcome, especially of rarities!

Upcoming Rockland Audubon Society Programs

RAS meets at Rockland Country Day School, 34 Kings Highway, Congers, NY

Doors open at 7 pm for refreshments; formal event kicks off at 7:30.

Dec. 4: In Darwin's Footsteps

Celebrate the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth with a presentation by **Francois Vuilleumier**, Curator Emeritus, American Natural History Museum. In his lifelong study of bird species Dr. Vuilleumier has visited many of the places Darwin himself went in his voyage around the world aboard the HMS Beagle and will discuss theory versus field work in research on the origin of species. Copies of his recent book, *Birds of North America*, will be available for purchase and signing.

Jan. 8, 2010: Native Plantings for Your Yard

Now that it is winter and the garden is asleep, come hear **Francis Groeters** from the Catskill Native Nursery present a talk on native plantings for your yard for the spring. Later in the year, we will take a group tour to the Nursery, located in Kerhonkson, NY, where Groeters specializes in nursery-propagated North American perennials, fruits, shrubs and trees. Here's an opportunity to find out which plants are a big draw for birds to visit your garden!

Feb. 5, 2010: The Environmental History of the Mouth of the Croton River

will be the topic of speaker **Scott Craven** whose illustrated talk covers the geologic, natural and cultural history of the lands and waters at the convergence of the Croton and Hudson. Craven will also detail the connection between Teller's Point and Roger Tory Peterson, credited with the development of the modern field guide format for observing the natural world. Craven spends much of his time along the river, kayaking, exploring and reading about its history.